SOFT TARGET

How the Indian Intelligence Service Penetrated Canada

Zuhair Kashmeri and Brian McAndrew

James Lorimer & Company, Publishers
Toronto, 1989

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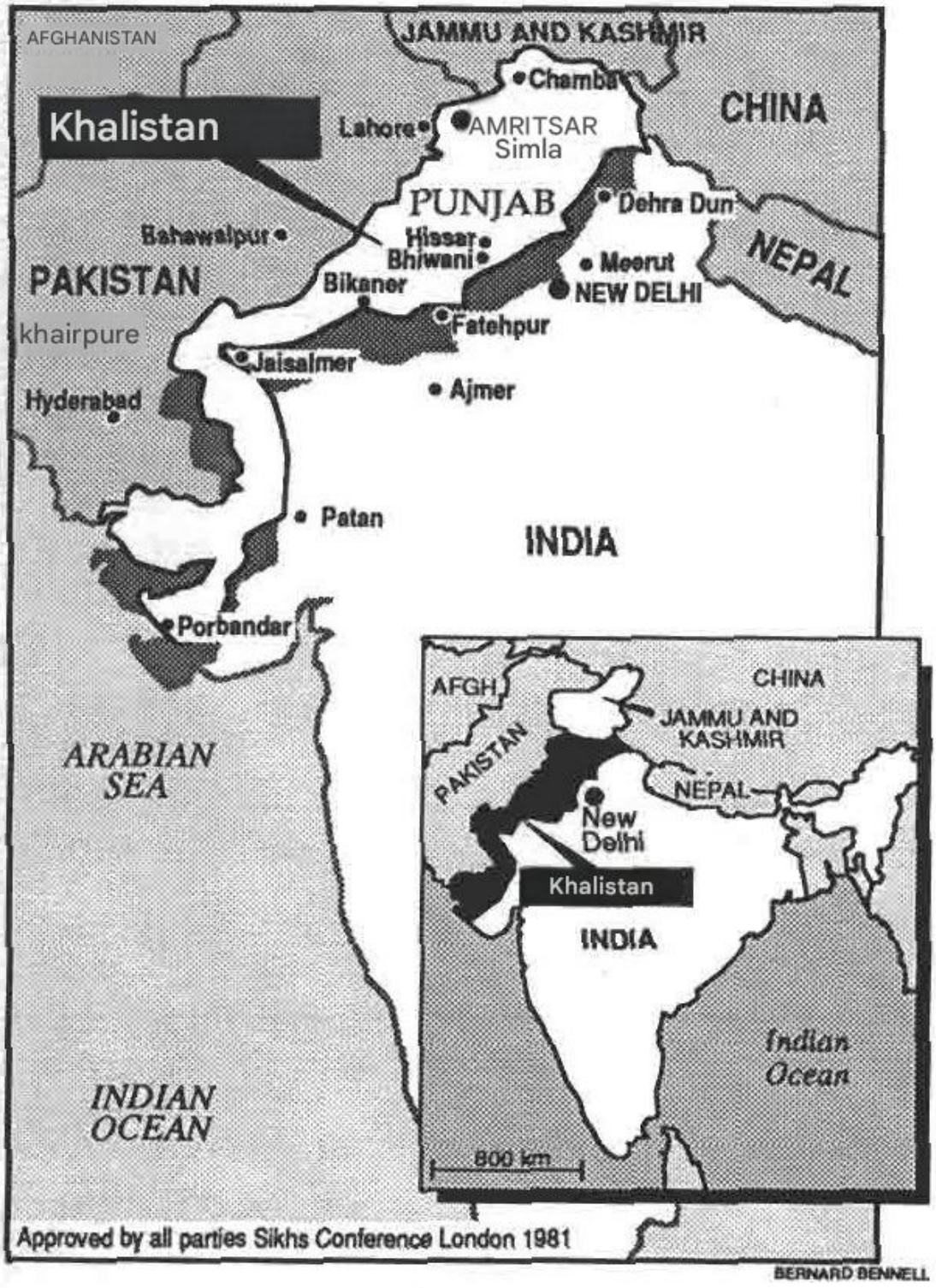
To the late Alfred Wilfred Davis, or "Alfie the Gunman," a British secret service agent in pre-independent India and a journalist in free India - my first introduction to the world of spies.

--Zuhair Kashmiri

For my uncle Hugh Beam, who provided inspiration early in my career as a journalist.

Brian McAndrew

India and Khalistan



Preface

"Soft Target " is an espionage term used to describe a country, institution or group of people that is easy to penetrate and manipulate for subversive purposes. We like to think of this book as a non-fiction spy thriller. It has all the bloodletting, drama and intrigue of a spy tale. But it is also a true story.

Our purpose in writing this book is to make people aware of the grave injustice suffered by a group of new Canadians - the Sikhs. For several years, India has been engaged in a devious and ruthless operation to manipulate and destabilize Canada's Sikh population. The operation has been orchestrated by India's intel-ligence service and has left the Sikh community estranged from Canadian society.

It has also led to death and destruction.

How did India get away with it? Part of the answer is that the keepers of our security, the Canadian Security Intelligence Ser-vice (CSIS) and its predecessor, the Security Service of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), were so preoccupied with the Soviet threat that nothing else seemed to matter. These agen-cies had neither the understanding of, nor the necessary multi-cultural manpower to deal with, any additional threats to Canadian security. To its credit, CSIS eventually woke up just before the tragic Air-India bombing that left 329 people, mostly Canadians, dead in June 1985. It chased the culprits right to the Indian embassy and consulates. But what it then faced was politi-cal interference.

CSIS is not a police force. It cannot make arrests and it cannot lay criminal charges. Neither can it issue marching orders to diplomats it identifies as spies. It is bound by law to notify the police about criminal matters.

When it comes to espionage, the Department of External Affairs must decide whether to remove the diplomats concerned. CSIS found External to be an obstacle in its pursuit of the Indian spy network. Officials in that depart-ment were not anxious to embarrass a country that was Canada's gateway to Third World trade.

Few in CSIS were happy with what was happening in their investigation of the Air-India bombing, as well as their investiga-tion into foreign interference in the affairs of Canadian Sikhs. Pat Olson and Fred Gibson were two of several CSIS officials who complained about the investigation. They and others were in-censed that the Indian connection was being buried for reasons of political and economic expediency. Similarly angry were some members of the Metro Toronto Police intelligence branch and the RCMP. Leads provided by such people led to the writing of Soft Target .

The names Pat Olson and Fred Gibson are pseudonyms. If their identities were not concealed, they could face prosecution under the Official Secrets Act and the loss of their jobs. We would like to thank them - and other people who volunteered infor-mation and whose identities have also been concealed - for their courage and forthrightness.

The authors also gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following people: Gol Kashmeri, Shamil and Shireen; Sarwar Kashmeri; Nancy McAndrew and Kelly; editor Curtis Fahey; Felies Einhorn; Said Zafar; Peter Snowdon; David Altman; Leslie Taylor; Warren Barton; Gerry McAuliffe; Randy Ray; Haroon Siddiqui; and colleagues at the Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star.

Zuhair Kashmiri

Brian McAndrew

Toronto, February 1989

Introduction

Revolutions are born in the most unlikely places. And so it was with Sikhism. It began in the mind of an eleven-year-old boy named Nanak in a small town called Talwandi - now Nankana Sahib in Pakistan in 1480 A.D. The area was predominantly Hindu, as was Nanak's family. It was time for the coming-of-age ritual in the Hindu tradition known as the thread ceremony. To the horror of Nanak's family and friends, the boy refused to have anything to do with the ritual.

Nanak's nonconformity did not fade with time. In his late teens, when his rebelliousness was still very strong, his parents concluded that he must be mentally ill. A doctor was summoned, and when he asked Nanak to elaborate on his ailment, the youth replied: "My one malady is that I am separated from myself, /And the other that I crave to be what I have to be, / And the third, that I'm ever in the eye of death, / And all that I see around me is to pass away. / Which one of these will ye cure, yea, which indeed?"

A few years later, goes the story, Nanak entered a pool of water and stayed immersed for three days. When he emerged, he had been transformed into Guru Nanak, the first of ten Sikh gurus and the founder of Sikhism. He travelled about singing his philosophy of life, accompanied by a Moslem called Mardana who played on his rebeck, a pear-shaped instrument like a violin. His message was like blasphemy to the Hindus, especially the upper-caste ones. A unique blend of mysticism, revolutionary zeal and idealism, combining elements of both Hinduism and Islam, Nanak's philosophy was rooted in a belief in one god nameless, formless and all pervasive.

Nanak discarded the mul-tiplicity of Hindu gods and goddesses. He also discarded the doctrine of reincarnation and, most important, the rigid Hindu caste system. Untouchables were as welcome into Nanak's fold as were warriors and princes. In fact, in later years, when the Sikhs built the Golden Temple in Amritsar, they constructed four entrances facing each direction as a sign of welcome for the four main castes of Hinduism Brahmin (priests), Shatriya (war-riors), Vaishya (traders, merchants) and Shudra (untouchables). In her master's thesis on Khalistan, the homeland being sought

by the Sikhs today, Beate Hamizrachi described Nanak's classless democracy this way: "Guru Nanak felt that the main cause of the misery of the people of Punjab was their disunity born of diver-sity of belief.... Therefore, he laid the foundation for the Sangat, the mixed congregation, where his Sikh disciples met as brothers-in-faith.... In the Guru Ka Langar, the free community kitchen all sat and ate together in one and the same row, regardless of distinction of caste, creed or status in life." This was indeed revolutionary by Indian standards of the day, when an untouch-able was put to death for allowing his shadow to fall upon a Brahmin. The community kitchen remains a feature of the Sikh religion even today, both in and outside India.

Nanak's quick wit helped him along. According to one story, when he visited the holy Hindu city of Hardwar along the river Ganges, he saw people taking water from the sacred river and, in the belief that it would give relief to the dead, flinging it towards the east. Nanak began throwing water towards the west. He told curious onlookers that he was trying to irrigate his fields in a distant town. British journalist Mark Tully wrote in 1985: "The spectators thought he was crazy and told him the water could never reach his field, which was too far away. He replied that their departed ancestors were much further away, and the water he threw was more likely to reach his field than the water they threw was to reach their ancestors."

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The word "Sikh" means "learner" or "disciple" in Gurmukhi (the old language of Sikh scripture). However, in Pali, an ancient Indian language from the time of Buddha, it means "God's chosen people." The Sikhs have ten gurus, beginning with the founder, Guru Nanak (1469-1539), and ending with the warrior saint, Guru Gobind Singh (1675-1706). It was the fifth guru, Arjun (1581-1606), who built the Sikh Vatican or Mecca, the Golden Temple. It was the assault on this temple by the Indian army in June 1984 that let loose the separatist fight for Khalistan. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, a Hindu Brahmin, ordered the assault on the anniversary of Arjun's martyrdom at the hands of a despotic Moslem Mogul ruler of India.

If it was Nanak who gave the Sikhs their mysticism, it was the tenth guru, Gobind Singh, who gave them their very visible identity. During his days, the Sikhs were surrounded on all sides by hostile forces, Moslem and Hindu. On March 29, 1699,

Gobind organized a huge Sikh rally. He then pulled out his sword and asked for five martyrs. Each of the five was taken into a tent, one at a time, the guru emerging each time with his sword dripping with what seemed like human blood. Then the five were brought out alive. Gobind named them the panj piyare (the beloved five) and baptized them. Water was sweetened and stirred with the khanda, or double-edged sword. Each drank handfuls of the water, which was also sprinkled over them a ceremony that today's born-again Sikhs still follow. They were then given the five symbols of Sikhism, each of which begins with the letter K: kachha, a special underwear to ensure agility and briskness -a mark of perpetual readiness; kirpan, a sword or dagger, an emblem of courage to be used for defensive purposes only; kes, or unshorn hair and beard, a mark of the ancient Hindu saints of the past; kanga, or comb, to keep the hair clean and in shape; and kara, or metal bracelet, a sign of bondage to the guru and to good deeds.

Henceforth, the final guru, said, all Sikhs will wear these five symbols and the men will take on the common name "Singh" (lion) and the women "Kaur" (lioness).

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Gobind Singh also added a more practical dimension to the mysticism of Nanak. He once said, "Mere bowing down of the head availeth not: for, do not the gunners do the same, and the hunters and the opium eaters?" Another of his dictums - a favourite of the more zealous Sikhs was as follows: "All means of redressing a wrong having failed, lifting of the sword is pious and just." He propagated other common-sense rules. For instance, the Afghans in those days came down and looted portions of northern India. The Sikhs began waylaying them after Gobind Singh announced that "robbing the robber is no sin!" His Sikhs would be "the saintly men" but they would also be "the manly saints."

After Gobind, the succession of the gurus ended. He left the Sikhs the final and eternal guru, the Guru Granth Sahib, or scrip-ture. From then on, the Sikhs would follow its teachings, a com-pilation of the sayings of the ten gurus.

The one thing that continued to elude the followers of Nanak and Gobind was a homeland they could call their own. They in-habited the fertile plains of the Punjab - literally meaning five rivers in northwestern India. The Punjab was historically the point

of entry for invaders such as Alexander the Great, and it was always the Sikhs who bore the first brunt of the invasion. The Punjab was also the place where these invaders settled down and intermarried, a fact that explains the lighter skin tone and eye colour of many Sikhs.

By 1799 the Sikhs had obtained their own empire. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, a visionary, decided to adopt the fighting style of the West. He enticed the Sikhs away from their preference for horseback warfare and employed foreign mercenaries to train the Sikh army. The more important of these mercenaries had served under Napoleon, and with their help Ranjit's empire grew. His kingdom was vast, from the borders of Tibet in present-day China to Afghanistan,

whose conquest returned to India the famous Koh-i-noor diamond, even today the largest in the world. But in 1839, after Ranjit's death, his son Dalip Singh converted to Christianity. He came under the control of the British, then gaining ground in India, and even presented the Koh-i-noor to Queen Victoria, who had "the mountain light" cut to one-third its size. Dalip Singh was reduced to "the status of fancied toy in the court of Queen Victoria... The Sikh homeland, which had become a reality, was now once again a dream."

Even the religion of Nanak came under siege at this time. Christian missionaries flocked to the Punjab after Dalip Singh's conversion, as did members of a formidable Hindu organization known as the Arya Samaj (the Aryan Society). Sikhs had little problem skirting the wily missionaries, but the Arya Samajists confused them and succeeded in convincing many to return to the purity of the Hindu fold. The founder of the cult, Dayanand Saraswati, called Nanak a hypocrite and attacked Christ and Mohammed with equal force. Today, the Arya Samaj continues to preach its message and supports such breakaway Sikh sects as the Nirankaris. Its members are among the prime targets of the Khalistan guerrillas.

The Arya Samajists succeeded in more ways than one. The 1881 census showed the Sikh population in decline while that of the rest of the country had increased. Casteism was back and the community kitchen had become the domain of privileged, upper-caste

Sikhs. General degeneracy soon followed. "By the turn of the century, one of the places in the Punjab where you might fancy your chances of buying pornographic literature, or bedding a prostitute, or perhaps gambling was the Sikh temple, the Gurdwara Innocent women coming to pray in the temples were not safe, and the mahants, or priests, used to boast about this." Called mahants, the decadent priests received the support of the British.

To restore the purity of the faith, a Gurdwara (temple) reform movement was born. The movement culminated in the setting up of the Central Gurdwara Management Committee, known today as the SGPC (Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Commit-tee).

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In 1920 the first elections were held for its 175 seats. Then a corps of volunteers was formed, called the Shiromani Akali Dal Akali meaning "immortal." They offered non-violent resis-tance to rid the temples of the priests. One group went to Nanak's birthplace, Nankana, where about 110 of them were shot, hacked to death or speared. Their bodies were cut up, piled up with logs and burned. The outrage led to the Sikh Gurdwara Act of 1925. The British Indian government had capitulated. Elected bodies replaced the mahants as the administrators of the temples.

The Sikhs formed the faithful Sikh regiment of the British-India army and, in the hope that the British would give them their own homeland, fought in both world wars. The British never did give it to them.

The Sikhs began coming to Canada in the early 1900s. The discrimination they suffered at the hands of the whites in British Columbia they were legally relegated to manual labour and not allowed to bring their wives to Canada - marked one of the darkest moments in Canadian history. When the expatriates set up the Ghadr and Akali Babbar movement to launch a violent campaign to free India from Britain, Canada and Britain worked to destabilize and divide the Sikhs in British Columbia and California. Britain then hunted down the movement's followers in India and executed a large group.

As independence for India drew near in 1947, the Congress Party, which was leading the fight against the British, promised the Sikhs a homeland of their own. In 1944

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of free India, declared: "The brave Sikhs of Punjab are entitled to special consideration. I see nothing wrong in an area set up in the North wherein the Sikhs can also ex-perience the glow of freedom." Mahatma Gandhi, the non-violent father of modern India, was quoted as saying that "Sikh friends have no reason to fear that [the Congress Party] will betray them. For, the moment it does so, the Congress would not only thereby seal its own doom but that of the country too.

Moreover the Sikhs are a great people. They know how to safeguard their rights by the exercise of arms if it should ever come to that."

Indian journalist M.J. Akbar wrote in 1985: "It sounded nice but, as the Sikhs discovered after August 1947, it was not much of a deal. Instead of the glow of freedom, there was only the shadow of a Hindu majority." In addition, the Punjab was par-titioned by the British into two parts. "The new province was to have 44 per cent of the population of the United Punjab against only 38 per cent of the land. Most of the canal-irrigated and fertile virgin land was left in the West Punjab [which would become part of Pakistan]." Even Nankana Sahib, Nanak's birthplace, was given to Pakistan by a London lawyer appointed to partition a country he had never visited. More than a million Sikhs and Moslems died in riots as the two criss-crossed to their new homes.

Then, when India's constitution was being drawn up, the Sikh representatives walked out in protest because the chapter on religious freedom made no distinction between the Sikhs and Hindu sects. While the rest of the country was being divided into states and provinces along linguistic lines, Punjab seethed with anger. Finally, in 1966, Prime Minister Gandhi, Nehru's daughter and successor, formed a truncated Punjabi-speaking state where the Sikhs were in a slim majority. The Sikhs, although dissatis-fied, turned what was left of Punjab into India's granary, supply-ing most of the country's wheat. Their entrepreneurship knew no bounds.

Under the iron-fisted Indira Gandhi, Congress Party politics took on shades of the Sikh mahants of the eighteenth century. She may have given the Sikhs their Punjab, but in return she expected total loyalty to her Hindu-dominated Congress Party. When that loyalty was not forthcoming, she did not hesitate to lash out. Her strategy was simple

foment racial and religious tension in order to discredit her enemies and reinforce her party's image as the guardian of law and order. In Punjab,

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Gandhi's government began by fostering Sikh-Hindu strife. Sikh separatists were then encouraged to become more vocal. And when events went beyond Gandhi's control, she announced to the nation that, all other solutions having failed, there was only one alternative: send in armed forces to restore order. She failed to anticipate that Sikhs all over the world would rise to the defence of their religion with the traditional battlecry: Raj karega Khalsa - "The pure faith shall rule."

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An angry and restless crowd of some five hundred Sikhs and other Indians filled the community hall at the Glen Rhodes United Church on Gerrard Street East, in an area known as Toronto's Little India. On the street throngs of Indo-Canadians were going about their shopping in stores displaying colourful saris, appliances and spicy snacks. Inside the hall there were lively sounds of argument in Punjabi, one of India's many languages. Suddenly, the sounds gave way to a hush as a white Canadian entered the room, surrounded by bureaucrats and plain-clothes police officers. As Lloyd Axworthy took his place on the stage, he knew the hush that had greeted his entry would not last.

The stark hall was chilly, and Canada's immigration minister rubbed his hands to warm them. It was November 21, 1981, and fall was quickly moving towards a cold winter. As the formalities of the meeting were put in order and introductions made, Ax-worthy decided that neither tact nor diplomacy would work with this crowd. He had bad news to give them about the two thousand Sikhs who had recently entered Canada illegally. They had all claimed refugee status on the grounds that India was persecuting them because of their support for a Sikh homeland. The sooner he gave them the news the better.

The two thousand Sikhs, he said, did not have a hope of being accepted in Canada because they did not fit the United Nations definition of a refugee. "Shame, shame!" the crowd shouted in unison. He tried to explain that the immigration system was being abused,

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Canada was being abused, its generosity was being abused. Shouts of "Liar, liar" filled the hall.

Axworthy decided to shoot from the hip. "This meeting is getting inflammatory," he said curtly.

Nirmal Dhinsa, an avowed Marxist and coordinator of the East Indian Refugee Aid Committee, jumped up and grabbed a microphone: "You only take refugees from white

countries such as Poland," he screamed. "People are starving on the streets of Afghanistan and India."

The immigration minister was taken aback federal cabinet ministers were not usually confronted with such anger and open contempt. Canada, clearly, was being ripped apart by yet another immigration crisis. There had already been rumblings from his white constituency that non-white immigration had to be slowed or even halted. Some seventy-five thousand Southeast Asian boat people had entered Canada as refugees after fleeing persecution in Vietnam and its neighbouring countries. Their arrival had sparked fears of cheap labour, of foreigners taking jobs from whites.

As for the two thousands Sikhs, they presented a special prob-lem. India, a burgeoning trading partner, had warned Canada that giving the Sikh separatists refugee status would be tan-tamount to an indictment of India's treatment of minorities.

Axworthy had visited India that year and seen the results of the separatist violence at close range. Hundreds of Sikhs had been killed in battles with security forces in their state of Punjab, the area they wanted to carve out from India as their homeland. While he was in India, a group of Sikhs had hijacked a plane to Pakistan, slashing their wrists to demonstrate their seriousness in achieving Khalistan, "the land of the pure." The trip left a strong impression on Axworthy. After his return to Canada, he told reporters: "I have seen what happened here [in India] - I have seen extremism in the Sikh movement. Next they may hijack a plane to Canada... We have to solve the problem now or it'll be used against us."

As Dhinsa's accusation reverberated in the hall, Axworthy stood his ground. He insisted that the two thousand who had come to Canada illegally would not be recognized as refugees. "They are not being persecuted... As a matter of fact, the Indian Government has informed me that the Sikh separatists are an embarrassment to India and not to recognize them ... They wanted me to get tough with them."

The matter was closed. The meeting was adjourned and in time the turbaned refugees would be sent back. Then they would be India's problem. But the issue was not so

simple that its Canadian dimension could be resolved by mass deportations. Separatist support in Canada continued to grow as India tackled its Sikh problem ruthlessly.

Frustrated by extremist actions and the failure of conventional law enforcement in Punjab, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sent in paramilitary forces. Time and time again, she declared that any support for the Sikhs endangered the world's largest democracy. Her government detained hundreds upon hundreds of suspected Sikh separatists under its draconian anti-terrorist laws. It compiled dossiers on every known separatist leader who mattered, and controlled the issuing of passports and all move-ment out of the country.

One of the Indian government's targets was a medical doctor from a small town in Punjab who in the late 1960s had rekindled the fire of an independent Khalistan. He had also managed to elude the vast security dragnet, making his way to the West. His name was Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan.

An experienced and wily politician, Chauhan entered politics, he would say, because as a physician he could feel the pain of the Punjabi farmers who received such poor payments for their meagre harvests of grain. His first steps towards a seat in the Punjab state legislature were as naive as they were fruitless he was trounced as an independent.

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In his second attempt he courted the support of the Communist Party of India. He lost again, his own father refusing to vote for him.

Following his repudiation of the Communists, Chauhan ran again - this time as a member of the Akali Dal, the predominant religious party of the Sikhs - and was successful. In 1969 he held the position of finance minister in Punjab, but in the unpre-dictable and volatile political climate of the subcontinent he lost the next election. He subsequently became general-secretary of the Akali Dal.

At that time, there was deep and widespread frustration in Punjab. The Sikhs, with 56 per cent of the population of Punjab, could not dominate any government because of

widespread political differences. Another grievance concerned Punjab's capi-tal. When the Punjab state had been formed in 1966, portions of it were taken away to make the largely Hindu state of Haryana. Chandigarh, the glorious city designed by the famous French architect Le Corbusier, became a shared capital between Punjab and Haryana. For the Sikhs, the arrangement was unacceptable.

An old Sikh leader, Darshan Singh Pheruman, went on a hunger strike, demanding action on the capital. He died seven-ty-four days later on October 27, 1969. Chauhan told supporters that he had sat by Pheruman on the day he died and had been advised by the weakened man to carry on the work he could not complete. According to Chauhan, the dying man whispered: "The Sikhs must have their own country."

Chauhan, while still the general-secretary of the Akali Dal, disappeared from India in 1970, leaving behind a wife, his home and medical clinic. He went to Pakistan. There are two versions of his visit to India's old enemy. The Indian government claims that he went to Pakistan solely to set up a support network for the Khalistan movement. (Since then, India has continued to claim that the separatist movement is entirely Pakistan-inspired and has little to do with India's treatment of the Sikhs). Chauhan's supporters and some leaders of the Akali Dal, how-ever, say he went to negotiate for Sikh control over the important Sikh temples

that remained in that country, including the Nankana Sahib temple, the birthplace of Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism. The Akalis were losing ground in Punjab and believed that the success of Chauhan's mission in Pakistan would boost the party's political fortunes. However, while he was there, the third Indo-Pakistani war started. To avoid being condemned as traitors, the Akalis quickly revoked his membership and denounced his visit. Chauhan chose not to return to a hostile Punjab and fled to the West, convinced more than ever that the future of the Sikhs lay in an independent Khalistan.

After fleeing Pakistan, Chauhan surfaced in England. On Oc-tober 13, 1971, readers of the New York Times were confronted with a bizarre half-page advertisement declaring the estab-lishment of the Republic of Khalistan and requesting recognition by the United Nations. The ad was placed by Chauhan, who would later become the self-appointed president-in-exile of Khalistan. The ad created a stir within India and angered authorities

in New Delhi. In the outside world, where there was little knowledge of the affairs of Punjab and its growing conflict, it quickly became as outdated as yesterday's newspaper.

Chauhan made his first visit to Canada in 1972. One of the groups he met was the Shromani Sikh Society, at the Pape temple in Toronto's east end. Although he had friends among the leaders of the temple, the membership was skeptical of his vision. They questioned not only the concept of Khalistan but his motive for promoting independence.

Chauhan replied with a parable. At his family home in Punjab, he told them, there were two dogs. One was large and lethargic, the other a yapping puppy. When someone came to his door, the puppy's noises would arouse the larger dog, whose bark would alert Chauhan to the presence of a visitor."I am the puppy," Dr. Chauhan explained to the Pape temple gathering. "My duty is to awaken you. Khalistan you will make for yourself. The time will come when people will shout in the streets, 'Khalistan, Khalis-tan.'"

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Chauhan continued preaching his message to Sikhs outside India until he returned to Punjab in July 1977. Two years later he challenged New Delhi's monopoly on broadcasting by installing a small but illegal radio transmitter inside the Golden Temple. In 1980 he unfurled a flag of Khalistan, clearly a seditious act under India's antiquated penal code.

It was at this time that Indira Gandhi, freshly re-elected as prime minister, passed through the Golden Temple during her campaign to return her Congress Party to power in Punjab. She sought Chauhan's support, but in return he demanded her sup-port for greater autonomy in Punjab. Chauhan recalled that Gandhi did not reply. She merely smiled. That smile prompted him once more to flee India. It was his final exit from the country of his birth. His wife was again left behind. His property was confiscated. His life in permanent exile began.

London became Chauhan's base as he travelled through Asia, Europe, the United States and Canada rallying Sikhs in support of a homeland. In London's Southall district, the city's "Little India," he opened Khalistan House, a comfortable home filled with

overstuffed chairs. Within a few months he released Khalis-tani postage stamps, passports and currency. The money was printed to resemble dollars rather than rupees which was not surprising, since the material was printed by his supporters in Toronto. It was distributed through the Khalistani consulate the home of one of the believers - in Bowmanville, Ontario, just east of Toronto. The publicity gimmick worked, attracting widespread coverage by the Indian media.

Although he had fled India, Chauhan would never really es-cape the attention of the Indian government. This became clear on one of his North American visits in December 1981. Chauhan landed at New York's John F. Kennedy Airport and moved easily through the winter holiday crowd. He was travelling on a United Nations travel document - his passport had been impounded by Indira Gandhi. With his flowing snow-white beard and his elegant Sikh attire, he stood out from the multitude of travellers.

He was warmly greeted by a small group of Sikhs dressed in expensive three-piece suits. However, there were others who seemed less kindly disposed. All Indians, they lounged in the vicinity, blending in with the throngs of Indians who are a regular feature of JFK, a hub for travel to the subcontinent.

The self-styled president of Khalistan was being followed by intelligence agents of the Indian government intent on tracing every step he took. They made note of every meeting he attended across the United States and Canada, compiling lists of Sikhs who turned out to listen to his speeches. Their presence did not escape his attention. As a former state minister, he could spot the agents from a mile.

After spending a week in the United States, Chauhan flew to Toronto. He stayed in Malton at the home of a childhood friend from Punjab, one of his earliest supporters and an influential leader among the fifty thousand Sikhs settled in the Metro Toron-to area. In an interview with a newspaper reporter, he was asked how India viewed his separatist preaching across the world. Chauhan casually mentioned the fifteen agents of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI India's intelligence service) he had spotted at JFK. This surveillance did not frighten him, he said, but it did keep him on his guard. It also kept the agents busy without providing them with any information of substance.

What Chauhan did fear, however, was India's plan for the future. As the separatist movement grew in the West, so would the game plan to stop it. He pointed to India's attempts to thwart the movement in Punjab and grimly forecast trouble for the expatriate Sikh communities. He was convinced that Indian agents, under the guise of refugees, immigrants and businessmen, had already infiltrated the Sikh community in Canada to fulfil a scenario drawn up in New Delhi.

Chauhan emphasized the importance of his next words by drawing his fingers together. Indian agents, he said, were about to begin playing a larger role in the Khalistan movement within Canada. They would become participants instead of passive monitors.

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They were setting out to create chaos within the Khalis-tan movement. They would undermine its efforts to raise money, and there was no saying where they would stop.

Canadian intelligence officials dismissed his claims as politi-cally motivated ramblings. The Department of External Affairs in Ottawa was diplomatic: "We have no knowledge of any Indian agents being sent here." A press officer at the Indian High Com-mission in Ottawa described the statement as "baseless and un-acceptable."

Chauhan's predictions were accepted without question by his supporters in Toronto. He was believed to hold a mystical power of prophecy. His friends would recall stories of his ability to look into a patient's eyes at his clinic in Punjab and make an immedi-ate- and invariably correct - diagnosis of the illness. Chauhan attributed his diagnostic skills to childhood experiences when he had worked with his father, also a medical doctor. He joked that he knew all about medicine before he entered medical school.

Chauhan was not about to challenge the legends created by his followers. He allowed them to believe what they wished about him. But even Chauhan could not have foreseen how ac-curate a picture he was painting. The events of the next few years would leave in their trail violence and tragedy as the Sikhs moved from moderation to militancy.

Chauhan, however, resisted the move towards militancy. In-stead, he lobbied for the support of other governments and at-tempted, but failed, to gain observer status for

Khalistan at the United Nations. His approach was in keeping with his belief that any problem could be resolved in the political arena.

Canada, even then, was a prime source of funds for the inde-pendence movement in Punjab. By Canadian standards, the handful who were promoting a Khalistan were involved in legitimate dissent. But for India, this dissent amounted to sedi-tion. The only way India could disrupt support for the Khalistan movement in Canada was by disgracing the Sikhs in the minds of other Canadians.

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And that was exactly what was done. On April 9, 1981, Zail Singh, India's home (justice) minister, announced that the government was mounting a surveillance operation against ex-patriate Khalistanis in places such as Canada. This seemingly innocuous campaign would go well beyond its intended purpose of monitoring the activities of people whom the Indian govern-ment considered a threat to India's sovereignty.

2

Kuldip Singh Samra was fidgety as he sat in the back of the spectators gallery of the small Osgoode Hall courtroom. He left the courtroom a few times, always returning after a short while. Finally, as Justice John Osler of the Supreme Court of Ontario started delivering his judgment in the middle of the afternoon on March 18, 1982, Samra settled down to listen, a stony expression on his face.

Osgoode Hall sits handsomely in downtown Toronto on the busy northeast corner of Queen Street and University Avenue. The 160-year-old red-brick building and its meticulously tended lawn and gardens are in serene contrast with the chaotic scene just outside its tall, black, wrought-iron gates. Inside, elegantly robed justices render their decisions in calm, reasoned tones. In 1982 only a few court constables patrolled the building. They were retirees who spent a lot of their time drinking coffee from foam cups and chatting with one another and other courthouse staff. Although they wore constables' uniforms, they carried no weapons. Clearly, no one inside the courthouse was prepared for Samra's reaction to the judgment.

Samra had come before the court in a bid to block the upcom-ing elections for the leadership of the Pape Avenue temple - a position within the Sikh community that brought prestige, power and quite often wealth. Politics play a large role in temple life, sometimes overshadowing the religious aspects. Samra was at the centre of a power struggle for control of the temple.

There were few people in Mr. Justice Osler's second-floor courtroom that afternoon.

Only those with a personal interest in the outcome of the case were present to hear Mr. Justice Osler as he emphatically dismissed Samra's application. There was no reason for the highest court in the province to intervene in the temple elections, the judge ruled.

To Samra, this rejection was not unexpected. As a leading activist in Toronto's Sikh community, he had been disappointed by the Canadian judicial system before. A dispute between con-flicting groups in 1975 over missing donations at the Pape temple had turned violent. Samra and his brother, Jaspal, had been stabbed and left bleeding on the street in front of the temple. Metro Toronto police had laid charges in the stabbings, but the case had never reached court. The charges were withdrawn, police said, for lack of evidence.

As Mr. Justice Osler finished reading his judgment, Samra drew a .357 magnum handgun and began firing wildly, stepping towards the front of the courtroom. Lawyers in other courtrooms within the cavernous building heard the explosions from the powerful weapon - they sounded like firecrackers, one recalled - but the sound was so foreign that they continued with their legal arguments for a few more minutes before panic swept through the halls.

Osgoode Hall courtrooms are exceptionally tiny, and Samra was hardly more than an arm's length away from the first two men struck by bullets lawyer Oscar Fonseca and Bhupinder Singh Pannu, a Mississauga truck driver and former wrestler with a reputation as a strongman in the Sikh community. Fonseca was sitting in simply to hear the judgment on behalf of his law partner, David Philp, who had handled the case for the temple in opposing Samra but had other business that day. When the shooting began, Fonseca turned and moved towards the gun-man, pleading with him to stop firing. He was struck as he raised his hand, saying, "Kuldip, don't shoot. Don't shoot..." The fifty-one-year-old lawyer died soon after the 3 p.m. shooting. Pannu, awaiting trial in a lower court on charges of assault and posses-sion of a handgun, died two hours later.

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There was one other victim. As the first shot struck Pannu, Amarjit Tatla, the outgoing president of the Pape temple, was bending over to retrieve from beneath his seat a temple records book. A bullet grazed his back and lodged in his shoulder as he turned towards the booming sound of the gun. He was left crip-pled from the waist down. While recovering in hospital, he told friends that he and Pannu were certain, as they huddled on the floor, that Samra was aiming towards Mr. Justice Osler, who had dived for safety beneath his raised dais when the shooting began.

It was all over in seconds. Samra fled quickly from the courtroom, turned left into the hallway and raced down the carpeted stairs to the first floor. He turned left once again and moved along a twisting hallway past administrative offices and the doors of the Law Society of Upper Canada. He stepped from a side door that faces the two distinctly curved buildings that make up Toronto's city hall. A car was waiting for him in a private laneway that separates the courthouse and Nathan Phil-lips Square in front of city hall. Samra stepped into the passenger seat and the car bolted onto Queen Street and away from the shock and panic that had descended on the courthouse.

Police believe that the .357 magnum was obtained on the morning of the shooting from a Metro Sikh known in the com-munity as "Billa" or "The Cat." He had entered Canada during the influx of two thousand Sikh refugee claimants the previous year and was one of a number of tough young men who backed Samra. The Cat was also the man who waited outside the court in the getaway car after arranging safe houses for Samra. Police do not believe they have sufficient evidence to charge the Cat alone but will do so once Samra is captured, if he ever is.

After the shooting, the Cat delivered Samra to an apartment on Willowridge Avenue in Etobicoke, a Toronto suburb to the west of the city. The highrise building is largely inhabited by immigrants. Police learned of Samra's hideout and raided the building, but the fugitive had slipped away fifteen minutes ear-lier. They later found that Samra would stay in one apartment for a few hours, then move to another in the same building and sleep in a third.

On day three of the massive manhunt, Samra drove to Montreal. From there, he flew to Vancouver on a regular flight but under an assumed name. In Vancouver he made a telephone call to his wife (then a secretary in Ontario's attorney general's ministry) and their two children. The call was traced to a Van-couver phone booth. When police surveillance determined that Mrs. Samra was preparing to fly to Vancouver, Sergeant Jamal Khan was assigned to tail her.

Khan, a member of the department's ethnic squad, was a straightforward police officer who played strictly by the book. He boarded the same flight and, police sources say, was

recog-nized by Mrs. Samra. The two even greeted each other. At Van-couver airport she was picked up by friends and driven off in a car while Khan searched for his contact from the Vancouver police. After three futile days in Vancouver and at a dead end, Khan returned to Toronto empty-handed.

All traces of Samra had vanished, but there was still a slim chance he might be apprehended at the border. The police were quite sure he would cross into the United States on the West Coast and head for California. American border checkpoints were alerted, but one of the customs officers told a Metro detec-tive that trying to sift through a carload of Sikhs was like trying to pinpoint one of 101 Dalmatians by its spots.

As it turned out, Samra did make his way into the United States, but police do not know how. Part of the folklore that has grown out of the Osgoode Hall shootings placed Samra in the second of two cars full of Sikhs crossing into the state of Washington from British Columbia. The first car was cleared by an American customs officer at an inspection booth, but before it drove off, a van smashed into the rear of a car at the neigh-bouring booth. As the customs officers rushed to the accident, Samra exchanged places with a Sikh in the first car.

When the customs officer returned, he waved the first car along and Samra was home free.

He may have crossed the border in a simpler manner. Some police investigators are convinced that Samra was given a legitimate passport and travel documents through an associate in the Indian consulate in Toronto. Either way, while the hunt for Samra was taking place in Canada, the prey was no longer in the country.

Samra hid out in Yuba County, California, which has the largest concentration of Sikhs anywhere in North America. Yuba County is a large and sprawling farm area, part of California's fruit belt. Much of the land is owned by wealthy Sikhs whose parents or grandparents settled in British Columbia and Califor-nia at the turn of the century. Elected officials are sensitive to this large concentration of a single but influential minority. The coun-ty declares Sikh holy days, such as the birth of Guru Nanak, founder

of the religion in 1499, as holidays. "If he's here and we have reason to believe he is, you will never find him here," a local sheriff said one month after the shootings.

In 1983 Samra surfaced again, this time in Punjab. He was spotted there by the local police but never taken into custody. He is thought to have crossed over into Mexico and flown from there to the Middle East, ending up either in Dubai, a flourishing desert city in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates, or in one of the other Persian Gulf states.

For centuries India has had a flourishing trade with the gulf states. Most of this is via dhows - small sailing craft whose design is traced back more than two thousand years - that cross from Bombay on the western Indian coast. In the 1960s and 1970s, when an austere India had banned the import of Western con-sumer goods and when gold was scarce, this route was used for clandestine enterprises. Smugglers, especially in Bombay, began taking over the dhows to plough their surreptitious trade, bring-ing back gold, transistor radios, electric shavers, jeans and other consumer goods.

They raked in millions of rupees with the cooperation of corrupt politicians, bureaucrats, police and cus-toms officers.

Among the top smugglers was a man named Mohammed Mastan, a follower of Islam who traced his origins to the Mos-lems of the Konkan district of India's west coast. His sudden rise into the ranks of the wealthy allowed him to fly down in luxury to Mecca for the mandatory haj, or pilgrimage, that Moslems are required to make once in their lifetime. In keeping with Islamic tradition, he then took on the title "Haji Mastan." The haji was a clever and ruthless man, a major contributor to the Congress (Indira) Party. Politicians attended his gatherings in India.

It was in one of the haji's dhows that Samra is believed to have travelled back to India, leaving no trace of having entered the country. Samra disappeared among the seventeen million people in the state of Punjab, where the authorities were more concerned with the separatist movement and growing violence than with a fugitive from Canada who had killed two people.

Metro police were frustrated in their search for Samra at every turn. Once he reached India, there was little more the police could do. One year after the Osgoode Hall shootings, Homicide Inspector David Boothby lamented, "Everything that has come in leads to a dead-end street. The file is open but it is not active."

Samra had proven more than a match for the police, and the reason lay in the network of powerful friends he had established since coming to Canada in 1970. His friends numbered the young, aggressive toughs who supported him at temple meet-ings, members of India's diplomatic corps and rich East Indians in Toronto. What amazed some of Samra's college friends who had also come to Canada was his transformation from a quiet student at Punjab's Lyallpur Khalsa College, where he finished a bachelor of science degree, to a raging firebrand.

In Canada Samra had first sought jobs that would befit the holder of a B.Sc. in India,

but most Canadian institutions and businesses did not recognize Indian degrees, least of all one from Punjab. Only degrees from universities in Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta and Madras were given some credence. His hopes dashed, Samra became a factory worker in a Consumers Glass Ltd. plant on Kipling Avenue in Etobicoke. There he suffered an accident that left his right thumb crushed a feature police would include in a photograph in an all-points bulletin after the courthouse shooting.

Samra's disenchantment with Canada set in at a time of racial strife in Toronto and Vancouver in the early 1970s. Brutal "paki bashings" were common: a Tanzaniyan immigrant of Indian de-scent was beaten and thrown on the subway tracks, a little Indian boy was strangled in the underground parking garage of an apartment building. There was name-calling, frequent beatings of Indian school children and taunting of sari-clad women.

The violent incidents delivered Samra into the world of ethnic minority activism. He joined a group of fellow leftists in estab-lishing the East Indian Defence Committee (EIDC). The EIDC was little more than a vigilante group with a telephone hotline in Samra's home to take reports of racial conflict. The group had decided to answer violence with violence. Because of its Marxist connection, it came under the scrutiny of

the RCMP's Security Service and the police intelligence services in Ontario and British Columbia.

The Security Service discovered that Samra had gathered around him a group of tough, young Sikh punks who had access to handguns and reputations for talking with their fists before opening their mouths. The group was involved in several alter-cations with police during demonstrations protesting against racism and supporting East Indian refugees. Samra was arrested in Toronto in July 1980 and charged with assaulting a police officer in the East Indian business section along Gerrard Street East. The incident only heightened his dislike of the police estab-lishment.

Samra behaved like the champion of the underprivileged and downtrodden. He was well liked by local left-wing activists, including supporters of the African National Congress, various anti-racism groups and the Communist Party of Canada. But curiously, he was equally friendly with the wealthy. While he despised Western culture, he eventually became a real estate agent and it was his habit to drink Scotch whisky while enter-taining his friends with sonorous renderings of Punjabi folk songs. Through a close friend, a millionaire travel agent in Toron-to, he met Davinder Singh Ahluwalia, the Indian vice-consul in that city. Embassies and consulates are exempt from the duties and taxes that greatly increase the price of liquor. Ahluwalia could get liquor from the consulate stock for a few dollars, and he freely shared this perk as a favour to his cronies, including Samra. With friends such as the travel agent and consular con-nections, Samra was never short of Scotch or money and was able to support his family through several bouts of unemployment.

When Samra's friends and supporters urged him to take over the Pape Avenue temple, he agreed. The temple had two attrac-tions for Samra's benefactors. It was, at that time, the only Sikh Gurdwara in Toronto, and it enjoyed both a fat bank account and a large tract of land worth several millions of dollars in Vaughan Township north of the city. As well, it was the hotbed of overseas Sikh political activities, the temple where in 1972 the exiled Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan had delivered his plea for a Sikh homeland, for Khalistan. While the temple members had initially been skep-tical, they eventually began moving towards support of the Khalistan movement. Samra's backers believed

that if he could assume a leadership role in the temple, he might be able to undermine the pro-Khalistan faction.

Samra was elected secretary-treasurer of the temple in 1975 but lost elections for president in 1977 and 1978. After his disap-pearance in 1982, his friends finally took majority control of the temple. The same friends were strong supporters of the Indian government and devoutly anti-Khalistan. Until 1987,

when pro-Khalistan Sikhs regained control, the Pape temple was known as the headquarters of the pro-India lobby in Toronto.

Samra's strong anti-Khalistan beliefs, however, did not prevent him from trying to become cozy with Sikh separatist supporters. Despite the tirades his leftist East Indian Defence Committee launched against the Khalistan movement, Samra actually swore allegiance to the separatist cause in 1981. Chauhan, Khalistan's president-in-exile, had arrived from England and was meeting a group of supporters at the Punjabi Village restaurant on Bloor Street West, a centre for Khalistani activity and under the scrutiny of several intelligence groups, including the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of India's Central Bureau of Intelligence.

Among those present was Samra, who delivered an uncharac-teristic warning to Chauhan during a discussion of the work of the Khalistan National Front, the doctor's government-in-exile. Samra quietly informed Chauhan that the most vocal participant in the discussion was a RAW informant. "I've seen him on my visits to the Indian consulate," Samra told the doctor, who replied, "I know, which is why I've been feeding him false plans."

Chauhan was curious about the outspoken Samra and later turned to his closest political advisor in Toronto, Pritam Singh Chohan, to learn more about him. Chohan expressed his admira-tion for Samra's activism on behalf of the Sikhs. He explained that Samra had taken up the cause of the two thousand Sikh refugees by forming the East Indian Refugee Aid Committee. Samra also worked zealously helping Sikhs with immigration and police problems, family disputes and financial woes. But he was a Communist,

Chohan told the doctor, and not prone to supporting a separate Sikh religious homeland at the cost of Indian unity.

Nevertheless, the doctor wanted to meet privately with Samra. The two met in December 1981 at Chohan's suburban home, where the doctor had once predicted future trouble for Canada through the covert work of Indian intelligence agencies.

They spoke for two hours, and when Samra emerged from the meet-ing, he claimed to be a changed man. He swore that he would follow the Khalsa, "the pure faith," to the last letter and openly pledged support for Khalistan. However, Chauhan, drawing on his studies of mysticism, made one observation: "His disfigured thumb, that scar on his thumb, worries me. If you read Kairon's book of palmistry that is the sign of a man who is prone to violent acts. Samra has a darker side to his personality."

Samra, indeed, had many sides. Despite his sworn allegiance to Khalistan, he was emphatic among his own friends that Khalistan had to be opposed. Police officers following Samra before the Osgoode Hall shootings heard him repeatedly denounce fundamentalist Sikhism and Khalistan.

When Samra disappeared after the Osgoode Hall shootings, Metro police discovered his seemingly unlikely connection to Ahluwalia, the vice-consul. Their relationship continues to baffle police and intelligence officials.

Ahluwalia had been posted to Canada in 1981 about the time the two thousand Sikh refugees were arriving in Canada. Gurdial Kanwal, editor of the Punjabi paper in Toronto, Navi Dhartiw, accepted money to print articles generated by the consulate. He described how several of the refugees were given passports by Ahluwalia backdated by as much as five years so that they could seek amnesty under a Canadian program to legalize illegal aliens. "He was a friend of the Sikhs," Kanwal insisted. "He was not a spy."

Ahluwalia, however, confided to one Sikh associate in Toronto that he worked for a branch of the Indian military intelligence and had at one time been stationed undercover in Tibet. After his arrival in Toronto, he began approaching leaders of the Sikh

community with the idea of organizing them into separatist sup-port groups under his control. "It bothered me that he was bent on organizing the Sikhs in this fashion," said one Sikh, a well-placed professional,

who interpreted Ahluwalia's suggestion as a means of splintering the community and rendering it power-less. Ahluwalia asked this same Sikh to move his business office next door to the Indian consulate at Yonge and Bloor streets. In what was actually a poorly disguised attempt at bribery, Ah-luwalia promised him that the consulate would provide all the business he needed. " 'Meanwhile, don't get involved in Sikh affairs," the Sikh quotes him as advising. "T'll train you and then I'll tell you when to get involved in Sikh affairs.' " The proposition was rejected, and the Sikh went on to work success-fully without the consulate's assistance.

Ahluwalia also failed in an attempt to cause the demise of the Sikh weekly newspaper, The Spokesman. It had been started by a group of prominent Sikhs as an alternative voice to the mainstream media after the 1984 Indian army assault on the Golden Temple. Although popular for its strong criticism of the Indian government, it was constantly on the brink of financial disaster. It would not be compromised by accepting advertising, including lucrative offers from the government-owned State Bank of India, and was kept alive by a group of about thirty Sikh businessmen in Toronto. Ahluwalia had the task of rendering the newspaper harmless. He offered financial support for operating costs and up to $50,000 for a printing press. The newspaper's backers, realizing that the offer would carry with it Ahluwalia's attempts to influence editorial policy, rejected the money. Al-though the newspaper eventually collapsed in 1986, its backers retained rights to the name to prevent it from being revived with a different editorial outlook.

Ahluwalia was not always as overt in his approach. Toronto photographer Datinder Singh Sodhi, a former corporate execu-tive, once discovered a woman in the basement office of his home using his photocopying machine to copy files he had on Sikh organizations in Canada. The woman was his ex-girlfriend, a Finn, who was having a relationship with Ahluwalia at the time. She confessed to Sodhi that the diplomat had sent her to photocopy the files.

(Ahluwalia's wife had earlier taken their two children and left for California after telling friends that Toronto was not the comfortable diplomatic posting she had expected.) In 1985 Ahluwalia quit the Indian foreign service and disap-peared from Canada. It was later learned that he went into the private import and export trade based in Iran.

Before the Osgoode Hall shootings, Ahluwalia had ingratiated himself with the Metro police. With the help of the consul general, he mingled with senior officials in government and in the Metro police department. He also won the confidence of police officers at the investigative level, most of them of Indian or Pakistani origin. Not surprisingly, the police turned to him for help in the search for Samra. For a vice-consul whose job was to promote his country and handle visa applications and the other pleasantries that go with diplomatic life, Ahluwalia was playing a strange role in Toronto's Sikh affairs. Clearly, he had an intel-ligence-gathering agenda.

According to one police officer, who helped organize a farewell lunch in 1985 for Ahluwalia: "Our [intelligence) files on the Sikhs were developed with his help. He used to wine and dine with the [police] brass. He would tell the Sikhs how he hated Indira Gandhi, she was a 'bitch and a whore' who had damaged the Sikhs. In this way he got the confidence of the Sikhs who would talk openly and he would create files on them. He would tell the police how much he appreciated what they were doing, that he was pro-police and they could rely on him to get them information. He would tell the police what they wanted to hear, that the Sikhs were fools but dangerous fools because of their violent nature. He would also fill them in a little bit about the Indian government."

The police also traced Samra's relationship to the travel agent. Originally from India, this man now lives in Los Angeles. In 1984 Metro police unsuccessfully prosecuted him for fraud in a case involving millions of dollars, and his home was among those raided shortly after the courthouse shootings. Police are con-vinced that Samra's escape was funded by the travel agent,

who had a close relationship both with Indian consular officials and Haji Mastan - the reputed smuggler who is believed to have arranged Samra's secret boat passage to India. They also talk about the travel agent as the man who laundered money for top Indian government officials through bank accounts in North America. Under Indian foreign currency regulations, Indian na-tionals are not allowed to maintain such accounts, since that country needs all the foreign exchange it can get to fulfil its import needs.

Unknown to the detectives, some of Samra's rivals who were providing them with leads had organized their own manhunt for Samra. They had put up a bounty of $25,000 and had hired two hit men from Detroit. They had done so, one of them said in anonymously exposing the contract after developing second thoughts about the scheme, because they believed that Canadian justice was too weak. The plan sent a shockwave through the police investigation, and the stakes for information leading to Samra's capture were raised to $100,000. But the leads dried up.

In mid-1982 detective Wayne Oldham made a revealing state-ment while explaining why the investigation had been foiled:

"We talked to the people in the community and there have been breaches of confidence. We are now taking a different approach." Someone supposedly helping the investigators was tipping off Samra on the police leads. In addition, police suspected that someone from the consulate had provided Samra with a passport and the documents he'd need to eventually reach India. It had been Alhuwalia's job as vice-consul to issue those same items.

Scores of telephones, including Samra's, were tapped, and homes were electronically bugged. Coming up empty-handed after utilizing all these resources was a major disappointment to the investigators charged with the most important manhunt in the country.

The information that Samra was in India finally made its way back to the Metro police,

who immediately contacted the federal justice ministry and asked for extradition proceedings. The prob-lem: there was no extradition treaty between the two countries.

Eventually, Canada did file papers under the Commonwealth Fugitive Offenders Act, but the papers lay dormant in the Indian bureaucracy until the Indian government suddenly made a strange demand. They offered a swap. They were willing to trade Samra for Talwinder Singh Parmar, the leader of the separatist Babbar Khalsa group from British Columbia who was wanted on charges of two counts of first degree murder - the alleged kill-ing of two policemen in India. An alleged double-murderer for an alleged double-murderer seemed like a fair barter to the In-dian government, but the Canadian government rejected the offer.

In January 1987 Canada and India finally signed a formal extradition treaty. One month later External Affairs officials in Ottawa made an extradition request through the federal Depart-ment of Justice for Samra's return from India. The Indian govern-ment, however, eventually replied that it no longer knew where Samra lived and that he probably had fled India. Why he would have left such a safe haven was not explained.

The Osgoode Hall shootings had damaging consequences for the image of the Sikh community in Canada. By the 1970s the anti-Sikh prejudices of the past had begun to wane, and indeed Canadians were becoming increasingly sympathetic to a people whom they saw as honest and hardworking. Then, after the 1982 shootings and other violent incidents later that year, the clock was turned back. Sikhs were now seen as unpredictable and violent.

The Samra fiasco should have been a revelation for Metro police and Canadian government officials. Only in retrospect have Canadian police and the country's intelligence service come to view it as the first act of covert meddling by the Indian govern-ment in Canadian affairs.

The extent of this meddling, which had as its aim the subversion of Canada's Sikh community, would become more apparent through another painful lesson before the end of 1984.

3

The wound in the back of Chris Fernandes's head had healed by the time he and a fellow Metro Toronto Police constable walked up the front steps of the RCMP's O Division head-quarters O for Ontario in Toronto on December 29, 1982.

They had arrived for a 1 p.m. meeting that had been arranged at their own insistence. After passing through the double security doors at the front entrance, they were face to face with the front desk officer, who examined their papers identifying them as members of the police department's ethnic relations unit. They explained that they were to meet with a member of the RCMP Security Service. At the mention of that name, all conversation ended. The Security Service implied national security, spies and espionage. Those topics were not discussed in the front lobby.

The pair were ushered into the Security Service offices and met by Corporal David Crabb, a veteran of the branch. He offered them coffee and asked Fernandes about his quick recovery. Like many other police officers Fernandes had met since the shooting, the corporal marvelled at his luck in missing death by mil-limetres. Fernandes had been shot during a violent confrontation at a Sikh demonstration on November 14, 1982, at the corner of Yonge and Bloor in front of the office tower housing the Indian consulate. But it was not the shooting alone that had prompted Fernandes and his partner to arrange the meeting with the Security Service. Their post-shooting investigations had un-covered a disturbing aspect of the case: they had received infor-mation which led them to believe that Metro's Sikh community was being manipulated by agents provocateurs from within the Indian consulate in Toronto.

They also had evidence that the violence at the demonstration where Fernandes had been shot had been engineered by officials from the consulate.

As a member of the ethnic squad, Fernandes kept in touch with the Indian community in Metro, including the Sikhs, who were growing more troubled over the worsening political climate in their native Punjab. The police department, with relatively few

officers from Metro's diverse ethnic population, relied on the ethnic squad to work among minority groups, monitoring them and helping to prevent crime. While they did this, they also gathered material for intelligence files on suspected criminal ac-tivity and the potential for violence.

But Metro police had no active intelligence operation to analyze the increasingly volatile Sikh community. Besides, the information on the Indian government was beyond the mandate of a local police department. Fernandes discussed the informa-tion with Dean Audley, then the staff sergeant in charge of the ethnic branch. Audley advised him to speak immediately to the force's intelligence branch and then "alert the RCMP Security Service." Audley rightly believed that the national police depart-ment would want to begin monitoring the actions of Sikh ac-tivists across the country and, more important, the efforts of Indian diplomatic officials to interfere in the Sikh community's affairs. When approached by Fernandes, the Metro police intel-ligence branch glanced over the information and recommended that Fernandes and his partner speak with the RCMP Security Service.

In their meeting with the Security Service, Fernandes and his partner went over the details of the demonstration and the motivation behind it. The Sunday-afternoon demonstration had taken place against a backdrop of increasing tension in Punjab. Two days earlier, the Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada had made a formal presentation to the senior investigator of the United Nations Human Rights Committee at the UN head-quarters in New York.

Sikhs were being arrested, tortured and even killed while in police custody in Punjab. India was tram-pling over the civil rights of its citizens in response to the grow-ing political unrest in Punjab, the federation said in its plea for UN intervention.

The main organizers of the Toronto demonstration were leaders from the Old Weston Road temple in the city's west end. (The temple had been established in 1975 after violent takeover battles at the temple on Pape Avenue.) Members of Sikh temples in Mississauga and smaller groupings from other cities in southern Ontario were also expected at the demonstration, as were a group of people from Chauhan's Khalistan

National Front. However, the Pape temple, then under the control of the faction aligned with Osgoode Hall killer Kuldip Singh Samra, had been deliberately left out. The mainstream Sikhs viewed the Pape temple caretakers as unsympathetic to the belief that the only way the Sikhs could survive in India was by obtaining greater autonomy within and control over their state of Punjab.

Fernandes, then thirty years of age and of East Indian ancestry, and his partner had heard rumblings within the community about a possible confrontation between the feuding temples at the demonstration. They knew that one of them had to give up his Sunday afternoon to attend the event. Fernandes, who wanted a day off later in the week, volunteered, although he usually liked to spend his Sunday afternoons relaxing in his highrise condominium in North Toronto or taking his girlfriend for a drive in the countryside in his BMW.

Because of the potential for violence at the demonstration, Fernandes recommended that Metro police provide a highly visible squad of uniformed officers at Bloor and Yonge to damp-en any enthusiasm for a violent outburst. But Metro's intelligence branch had not been analyzing the information provided by the ethnic relations squad. Unaware of the potential for violence, police administrators turned down the request for support.

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Besides, the demonstration was being held the same day as the annual Santa Claus parade. Crowd and traffic control for the tens of thousands of adults and children who would jam the parade route through downtown Toronto was considered a higher priority than a gathering of Sikhs. When Fernandes arrived for the demonstration, he was shocked to find just two uniformed officers leaning against the side of a yellow police cruiser and paying little attention to the Sikhs as they assembled.

Standing atop the steps that led to the office tower's entrance, Fernandes watched as a crowd of about two hundred Sikhs slow-ly gathered. Some carried placards heaping abuse on Prime Min-ister Indira Gandhi. Others demanded greater autonomy for the Sikh state of Punjab. Several faces were familiar to Fernandes.

A few of the Sikh leaders came up the steps and told Fernan-des that they had a petition to deliver to the consul general listing their demands for political changes in Punjab. The policeman said he would act as an intermediary and went upstairs to the consulate. The only consular official in the office at first refused to move but was eventually persuaded by Fernandes at least to meet with a small delegation and accept the harmless petition.

Meanwhile, the protestors had become more agitated, spilling from the sidewalk onto the road, blocking traffic. The two uniformed officers quietly kept their distance. When Fernandes returned outside, there was a rude shock awaiting him. Members of the Pape Avenue temple had gatecrashed the demonstration and were confronting the others. They were not shouting pro-Khalistan or anti-Indira Gandhi slogans. Many of them, members of Samra's East Indian Defence Committee and the East Indian Workers Association, were vociferously voicing pro-India slogans. The focus of the demonstration shifted from the consu-late as the opposing factions began pushing and shoving. During the melee, sixty-year-old Dara Singh Bains was shoved to the ground, his turban knocked off. The conflict escalated quickly, growing more vocal and increasingly violent, until suddenly there was the sound of gunfire.

The intersection had become even more crowded as people leaving the just-ended Santa Claus parade moved towards the Yonge/Bloor subway entrance. The sound of gunfire created mass panic. Toronto Star reporter Tim Harper, assigned to cover the demonstration, wrote in the next day's newspaper: "The panic comes at you in a wave in that split-second when you don't know which way to run.... But I never saw him [the gunman] and that is the most frightening aspect of being trapped in a panicked crowd."

Fernandes, reacting to the gunshots rather than to the crowd, immediately spotted the gunman, Fauja Singh Bains, vice-presi-dent of the Old Weston Road temple and the son of Dara Singh. He looked towards the uniformed officers, but they had run the other way, taking cover behind the cruiser, their service revolv-ers drawn and trained uselessly on the fleeing crowd. Bains hadn't stopped firing.

Fernandes drew his .38-calibre revolver from the shoulder holster beneath his suitcoat. He could not fire safely towards Bains, who was zigzagging through the crowd. Diving

after him, pushing aside running demonstrators, Fernandes finally caught and tackled the gunman. As he fell, Bains fired a shot that ricochetted off Fernandes's holster and lodged in the ankle of another Sikh demonstrator. Bains fired again but the shot missed Fernandes's head. Standing a few feet behind Fernandes as he struggled to subdue Bains was nineteen-year-old Gurraj Singh Grewal, who was also carrying a gun. Grewal aimed the weapon and fired just as Fernandes moved his head. The bullet grazed the back of his skull, leaving a five-inch furrow that took twen-ty-five stitches to close. He collapsed to the ground as Bains and Grewal escaped north along Yonge Street.

In all, three men were shot by Bains. Sukhraj Singh Kalirai, thirty-four, of Malton was shot in the neck. His brother, Balbir Singh Kalirai, twenty-one, was struck in the chest and arm. Bahil Singh, thirty-five, was hit in the ankle by the bullet ricochetting off Fernandes's holster. All three men, members of the Pape temple, recovered from their wounds.

Bains was sent to jail for life on three counts of attempted murder. Grewal was sentenced to fourteen years on the same charge. An Ontario appeals court later reduced the sentences to eighteen years for Bains and nine for Grewal.

For days afterwards, the demonstration and the reasons be-hind it were lost in headlines screaming "Were Sikh shootings random or at targets? police are asking." The incident reinforced the impression that the Sikhs were a violent community, a menace. The plight of the Sikhs in Punjab received brief mention and was then ignored.

While the media remained preoccupied with the body count how many arrested, how many charged, how many injured and so on the police were looking at other things. To prove the criminal act of attempted murder, they would have to estab-lish a mens rea (criminal intent) case: they would have to prove that the accused had formed the intention to appear at the demonstration with guns and to use them. As Fernandes and his partner probed deeper into the case, they pursued questions beyond the simple act of the shooting. Prominent among them was the question of whether there had been a threat from some-where that had prompted protest organizers to arrive on the scene carrying guns. Bains, in interviews prior to the demonstra-tion, had stated that "the other side" had threatened to show up with guns and, therefore, so would he and his faction.

The "other side" was the pro-Indian Pape temple group. In the following weeks, it became clear to Fernandes that the counter-demonstration that provoked the shootings had not been a spon-taneous action. On the contrary, the police information showed that the counter-demonstration had been carefully orchestrated - and the composers were housed on a foreign piece of land on the twenty-second floor of the Bay Building.

Now, in the Security Service office, Fernandes and his partner came to the point: the counter-demonstration and the response to it were instigated and manipulated by a covert Indian intel-ligence operation out of the local Indian consulate. They asked the Security Service to launch a full-scale investigation into domestic interference in Canada by a foreign power, interference that threatened the national security and well-being of Canada. The policemen's case did not revolve solely around the events of the Toronto demonstration. Officers in the East Indian and Pakistani wing of the Metro police ethnic relations unit had been aware for some time of Indian government infiltration into the Sikh and Hindu communities in Toronto. The moves escalated as the political climate in Punjab worsened. Ethnic squad officers had come across several Sikhs who were being paid by the In-dians to monitor activities of other Sikhs, especially the pro-Khalistanis. They learned that certain ethnic Punjabi newspapers in Metro were publishing pro-Indian articles in return for money and other favours.

And then there was the vice-consul himself, Davinder Singh Ahluwalia. He gave the appearance of being a good-hearted, pro-police diplomat who was helping the Metro department develop its intelligence files on the Sikhs. Until the shooting incident, the ethnic squad trusted Ahluwalia completely. Later, it suspected that he was manipulating the police for his own purposes while wielding substantial influence over activities within the Sikh community. The information Ahluwalia was giving to Metro police about Canadian Sikhs was also kept on file at the consulate. It was used, police learned, to deny Canadian Sikhs visas to visit their homeland one more pres-sure tactic adopted by the consulate to discourage support for independence in Punjab.

Ahluwalia had casually mentioned to an ethnic squad officer that violence might break out at the demonstration. His words hadn't comprised an urgent warning, but, after the fact, he could say he had at least alerted the police to the danger.

If anything, his statement would further enhance his credibility as a knowledgeable and trustworthy source of information.

On the night before the demonstration, Ahluwalia paid a late visit to the home of Datinder Singh Sodhi, a freelance photog-rapher. The vice-consul was in a tense mood, Sodhi recalled in an interview with the authors. He wanted Sodhi to photograph the demonstration and asked for pictures of every participant. Sodhi accepted the job, thinking it would be a good opportunity for his teenaged sons to gain some experience in photojour-nalism.

Immediately after the demonstration, Sodhi telephoned Ah-luwalia from a pay phone and asked if he knew what had hap-pened. The vice-consul said yes, he had watched from the consulate's office window. In a rage, Sodhi asked Ahluwalia if he had been aware that there would be trouble. Ahluwalia replied that he had known everything. "I said, 'You knew there was going to be shooting and you didn't warn me!' He said, 'Let's not talk on the telephone. Come up." "

Later that afternoon, Sodhi went to the consulate and lashed out at Ahluwalia and Consul General P.N. Soni for endangering not only his own life but those of his two sons. When Soni denied any involvement, Sodhi angrily replied, "If you didn't [know], why was there such an urgency that Davinder comes over at night and requests photographs?" Sodhi stomped out of the of-fice, refusing to hand over the film to Ahluwalia. He also refused to heed Ahluwalia's demand to keep the film away from Metro police and the media. He sold the photos to the Toronto Star.

By the time he reached his Willowdale home, not far from Ahluwalia's apartment, he discovered a favourite consular peace offering inside his front door a case of twelve bottles of ex-pensive Chivas Regal Scotch. He sent the gift back to Ahluwalia's apartment. "Later Davinder came over and begged and pleaded. There was no question he knew what was going on. He asked me not to give the pictures to the police or papers, only to him.

We did not meet too much after that. I was really mad," Sodhi said.

After picking up pieces of information from trustworthy sour-ces within the Sikh community, police became suspicious of Alhuwalia's motive for warning them of the possibility of violence at the demonstration. Soon their suspicions grew into a firm conviction that the violence had been triggered by consular officials.

On the morning of the demonstration, the investigators learned, Ahluwalia, accompanied by Consul General Soni, went to a temple in York Mills that housed one of the smaller Sikh congregations in Toronto. There they met with a group of anti-separatist Sikhs and filled their heads with stories of impending violence at the upcoming demonstration. Separatist demonstrators, the diplomats claimed, had issued threats that they would be carrying arms and there would be shooting. The fantasy became more elaborate, police were told, as the diplomats warned the York Mills Sikhs to watch out for a dark van that would slowly drive past the demonstration. The diplomats said that the van would be occupied by fellow anti-separatists from the Pape Avenue temple who had installed an automatic rifle in the vehicle and planned to open fire on the demonstration.

Fernandes and his partner were stunned when they heard of the outrageous claims made by the consular officials. The story was totally fabricated - the diplomats had not seen fit to repeat such a gruesome warning to the police but it had served to whip up an even greater hatred between the opposing Sikh fac-tions. It had not taken long for tales about armed Sikhs to spread to members of other temples participating in the demonstration. Angry threats had been exchanged before between leaders of the Pape and Old Weston Road temples. Old Weston Road, after all, was created after a falling out among members of the Pape con-gregation.

It was no wonder, then, that the two sides arrived at Bloor and Yonge on the afternoon of the demonstration prepared for a fight.

Fernandes informed the Security Service's Corporal Crabb that the consular officials had issued a "genuine threat" to the Sikhs during the meeting at the York Mills temple. If the Sikhs did not stop protesting against India and Indira Gandhi, the officials had stated, the community could look ahead to some very troubled times. Fernandes told the corporal that he was "convinced the Indian government was involved in covert opera-tions with the Sikhs, trying to make them fight with each other."

Fernandes and his partner were relieved when Crabb said he would recommend to headquarters in Ottawa that a security investigation be launched into the activities of the consulate in Toronto. They left the O Division offices with assurances that the Security Service would be calling on them for additional infor-mation and assistance. It was the last contact they had with the Security Service on the issue.

The RCMP did not ignore just the information from the two Metro police constables; the force also failed to listen to warnings from a senior intelligence officer within the Security Service who had worries about the possibility of Sikh unrest in Canada.

Unknown to the far-sighted pair of ethnic squad officers, the topic of Sikh unrest would be raised at a regular meeting of Security Service strategists. The meetings were gatherings of various section heads responsible for counter-subversion, counter-espionage, counter-intelligence and counter-terrorism. In addition to reviewing the work of each section, they discussed future projects. Among the men present at these meetings was Pat Olson, a seasoned Security Service agent.

Olson recalled that at one meeting in 1983 a senior officer raised the issue of the Punjab situation. The officer had been reading about ways the Indian government instigated violence between the majority Hindus and the minorities, especially the Sikhs.

He outlined his research into the strategy used by the Indian government to destabilize minority populations, provoke them into violence and then crack down on them. Given that Canada had a sizable number of these Indian minorities and a sizable number of Hindus, he asked, would it not be logical to assume that there was a potential for conflict between the groups in Canada over political issues in India? He wondered whether there

was more to the Osgoode Hall shootings and the demonstration where Fernandes was shot than met the eye.

The proposed intelligence operation into Canada's East Indian community was vetoed, Olson said, a decision the RCMP, and later CSIS, would regret. The Osgoode Hall murders and the Bloor/Yonge shootings were Criminal Code matters and clearly outside the jurisdiction of the Security Service, the officials at the meeting decided. There was also the question of manpower. The Security Service, in agreement with other friendly services such as the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Britain's Military Intelligence (MI-5), directed most of its operations at the supporters of Communist East bloc nations. Even if the Security Service wanted to begin an investigation into Canada's East In-dian community, there were not enough bodies to take on the project. In addition, the Security Service was unable to infiltrate the community because it did not have any East Indian, Pakistani or Sikh agents. The RCMP was a closed shop consisting largely of white males. Finally, the Department of External Affairs con-sidered India an ally with immense trade potential. An investiga-tion of the East Indian community might have unfortunate diplomatic and commercial results.

Had the Security Service bothered to do even a little bit of homework and research, it would have come up with crucial indicators in that year (1982) that would have put the senior officer's recommendation and that of the two Metro policemen into a clearer context. The violence in Punjab was continuing unabated. There were daily killings of Sikhs, Hindus and police officers. There was a stream of tales of Sikhs being detained by Indian security forces, tortured and then killed in detention. The stories spread quickly to the West.

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Outside India, Sikhs were boycotting the state-owned Air-India airline. Karam Singh, owner of Maharajah Travel in Toron-to, said that his bookings for the airline had dropped about 20 per cent even though he offered a discount of 24 per cent off the regular fare. In addition, the Sikhs had submitted a petition to the Western leaders meeting at the 1982 London Summit asking for an investigation of human-rights abuses in Punjab, and were appealing to Canadian members of Parliament with the same request.

As the activity among Sikh expatriates in Canada increased, the Indian government's intelligence operation grew stronger and bolder. From among the players who were close to the In-dians, there emerged the clear message that the Indian govern-ment would pursue counter-terrorism even more aggressively, at home and abroad. And each time it took ruthless measures in India, Canada's Department of External Affairs would come down on the side of the Indians, infuriating Sikh Canadians.

As 1982 drew to a close, the local consulate must have been pleased with its accomplishments. When the Canadian media talked about the Sikhs, they referred not to the repression in Punjab or to the Khalistan movement but to the shootings at Osgoode Hall, the gunning down of a Canadian policeman at Bloor and Yonge, and the dangerous activities of a hot-headed minority that insisted on importing old quarrels to a new country. If there was any public sympathy, it lay with the Indians for having to deal with such a bunch.

4

The year 1983 was one of relative calm for Canada's Sikhs. Stung by the public's reaction to the Osgoode Hall killings and the shootings outside the Indian consulate, the Sikhs became an even more insular group, cutting themselves off from the rest of Canadian society. Their social, spiritual and political activities began to revolve more and more around the temples.

The Gurdwara, or temple, is a symbol of strength within the Sikh community. It is a gathering-point for family worship each Sunday. The Gurdwara is also a focal point for Sikh politics. In the male-dominated Sikh society, the priests of the religion are men, as are the members of the councils elected to oversee the opera-tions of the temples. Male Sikhs gather frequently at the temple, while their wives, even if they come to the temples, remain on the sidelines, caring for the children.

The temple is like a brotherhood. It is no wonder, then, that Sikhs turned inward for support, relying on the temples for leadership and as a forum for exchanging information about the struggles in Punjab. The temples grew wealthier and more powerful as an increasing number of Sikhs who had abandoned the rigors of the religion for the more comfortable and liberal Western lifestyle began returning to the faith.

Only through the temples could they keep up with develop-ments in their homeland. Some of that information was, at best, distorted and, at worst, simply false. But they preferred it to what the major Canadian newspapers were telling them, that they should forget Punjab and get on with becoming Canadians. Decrying the Indian consulate shootings, the Toronto Star concluded in an editorial:

"In a new land, old feuds should be quietly abandoned."

Certainly, the struggle between the two groups should not have erupted on the streets of Toronto, but the opinions of the newspapers, reflecting the view of the mainstream society, served only to alienate the Sikhs further. Asking the Sikhs to forget about what was happening in Punjab was like demanding that Canadian Jews disregard the plight of

the Jewish 'refuseniks' in the Soviet Union. If only because they all had families still living in Punjab, the Sikhs would not turn their backs on their homeland.

In April 1983 the Sikh community organized another public demonstration. This one was peaceful, a celebration of the found-ing of the Sikh nation. More than fifteen hundred participants marched in a parade of multi-coloured turbans through the heart of Toronto from Wellesley and Jarvis streets to Queen's Park, the home of the Ontario legislature. There, the inevitable round of speeches dealt with religion instead of politics. The only disrup-tions came from outside the parade: catcalls from passing cars and insults hurled by the residents of highrise apartment build-ings along the parade route. "Take those diapers off your head," came a shout from the balcony of one Carlton Street apartment. An egg was launched from the balcony of another apartment but came closer to striking a group of huddled Metro police officers than it did the Sikhs.

The police had learned their lessons from the past. Embar-rassed by the revelation that they had failed to provide enough security at the 1982 demonstration, the police administration deployed nearly one hundred officers to watch over the marchers in the April 1983 parade.

The following month, during the Bain/Grewal trial, security around the University Avenue county courthouse was severe. Everyone who entered was searched and checked with metal detectors. Judge Hugh Locke wore a bulletproof vest on May 19, 1983, when he found the two men guilty of attempted murder.

Twenty armed Metro police officers stood guard inside the courtroom. They were prepared for a recurrence of the shootings a year earlier, when Kuldip Singh Samra took offence to the judgment in the neighbouring Osgoode Hall courthouse.

Yet the police still suffered from a serious handicap. Without an intelligence operation to keep them informed of the plans of Sikh activists in Canada, the Metro police and RCMP could do little more than watch over parades or set up metal detectors outside courtrooms whenever a Sikh came in conflict with the law.

As for the Sikhs, they were unable to generate either public or political support. Temple leaders met with Ontario Attorney General Roy McMurtry in an attempt to restore order to the community. They asked McMurtry to pass a Gurdwara bill that would regulate the management of Sikh temples in Ontario, similar to the law enacted by the governing British in India about sixty-five years earlier. McMurtry rejected the proposal on the grounds that it violated the principle of separation of church and state. He wrote off the recent violence as merely the acts of a few "hotheads."

Publicly rebuffed, the Sikhs retreated to the temples, where they kept up with the news on the conflict in Punjab. In June 1984 the conflict reached its peak with Operation Bluestar - a military assault on the Golden Temple. That event changed the path of India's future. It also changed the thinking and the politics of Sikhs in Canada and throughout the world.

The origins of the operation are tied up with the story of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, for a time a tool of the Indian government but who ultimately embodied its greatest failure.

Jarnail Singh was born in 1947 into a poor farming family in southern Punjab. As the youngest of seven sons, he had few demands placed on him on the farm and his father allowed him to be recruited as a child for religious training in a Gurdwara.

The Gurdwara had links with the village of Bhindran, and some heads of the sect adopted the name "Bhindranwale." Jarnail Singh received only five years of formal schooling, but his command of the Punjabi language and his preaching skills were remark-able. He studied at the Damdami Taksal Gurdwara under its chief preacher, Sant Kartar Singh. This Gurdwara was forty kilometres from the Sikh holy city of Amritsar.

In Punjab, sants (holy men) have been described as "a univer-sity on the move." They travel with an entourage from village to village, preaching the faith. When Sant Kartar Singh died in a 1977 car crash, the leadership of the influential Damdami Taksal sect fell to Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

In the same year, Indira Gandhi lost the national elections and was displaced as prime minister. Afterwards, her son Sanjay Gandhi, whose abuse of emergency powers enacted

by his mother prior to the election had contributed significantly to her defeat, sought ways to divide opposition to the Congress Party throughout the country. In Punjab, Zail Singh, who would go on to become the country's home minister and later president, advised Sanjay Gandhi to recruit Bhindranwale. However, Bhindranwale was more concerned at the time with preaching fundamentalist Sikhism: abstaining from alcohol and tobacco, never cutting one's hair, and the like. But Zail Singh and Sanjay Gandhi proved persuasive. Recruited into the game plan of the Congress Party, he became known throughout the state for his strong speeches and able leadership, although he never sought election himself.

After the Congress Party regained power in 1980, Bhindran-wale began working independently but with the party's tacit protection. Accused of ordering the killing of a group of Nirankaris, considered a heretical Sikh sect, Bhindranwale was released from jail with the assistance of Zail Singh. Mass rioting followed his second arrest, this time for the murder of a newspaper editor. Again, Zail Singh intervened and the legend of Bhindranwale grew larger.

Bhindranwale was never directly inducted into the ranks of the Congress Party, only encouraged to carry on with his mission of promoting Sikh fundamentalism and given protection by the state. The party's strategy can be loosely compared to the setting of a controlled forest fire in order to check the spread of a greater fire- in this case the political opponents of the Congress Party. But the scheme ran into problems. The deliberately set fire took on a life of its own. Bhindranwale carried on with his mission even after the Congress Party had won Punjab. He first set out demands for greater autonomy in Punjab, demands that were echoed by the opposition in Punjab, the Akali Dal. Eventually he became the chief commander of the Khalistan independence movement, and as militancy grew in Punjab, he took up residence in the Golden Temple in the summer of 1982 and unleashed a campaign of violence that led to the slaying of more than four hundred people.

Bhindranwale never left the Golden Temple alive. He fortified the temple and amassed arms for his followers, who also lived inside the holy shrine complex. The forest fire had spread too far. Despite arguments that a siege of the Golden Temple would be sufficient

to smother the blaze, Indira Gandhi took the more drastic and dramatic step of ordering a military action against the shrine.

Operation Bluestar began in the early hours of June 5, 1984. A large force of the Indian army, supported by artillery and tanks, invaded the Golden Temple to "flush out Bhindranwale and his band of terrorists." The day Gandhi picked was itself unusual: the anniversary of Guru Arjun Singh's martyrdom, when thousands of men, women and children made a pilgrimage to the shrine. It was as if New Delhi, in addition to wiping out Bhindranwale and his followers with one stroke of the sword, had decided to show the Sikhs who was in control of Punjab. Although no accurate count was ever made, as many as two thousand people may have died in the raid. The ancient building was severely damaged, and many old hand-written religious works were destroyed.

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The massacre was like a bolt of lightning that jolted Sikhs around the world.

In Toronto nineteen-year-old Jasbir Singh Saini was listening to the hourly radio news. After the fourth report of the Golden Temple massacre, he could no longer contain his rage. Wearing a black turban, the one-armed grade twelve student took the subway to the Indian consulate at Bloor and Yonge streets. Enter-ing the twenty-second-floor office, he went on a rampage, smash-ing a portrait of Indira Gandhi before he was chased away by security guards. When one of the privately hired guards returned to the office, she was surprised to hear the sounds of destruction continuing.

In a sworn statement to Metro police, the security guard said that she watched Consul General Surinder Malik directing the demolition of more portraits and the overturning of furniture. She also heard him say that it should be done hurriedly before the media arrived. Her testimony was corroborated by a radio reporter, Dana Lewis, who picked up the emergency call on his police monitor. He arrived at the consulate in time to witness Malik finishing what the one-armed student had started.

After his arrest, Saini freely admitted that he had stormed the consulate. Although he was charged with creating mischief, a minor Criminal Code offence, the case never went to court. Malik, made aware of the security guard's statement to police, claimed

diplomatic immunity and refused to testify. Metro police believe that the information was leaked to Malik by one of the department's own officers.

Jasbir Saini's outburst reflected the mood of the Sikhs after Operation Bluestar. This is how Indian writer M.J. Akbar described the aftermath of Bluestar: "There was a sudden lull in the Punjab. All sections of Sikh opinion, however, from the urban sophisticates sipping their expensive Scotch in the bungalows of Delhi to the peasants in the fields, were horrified at what had happened. Even those who had never condoned secession could not get themselves to justify the army action.

Sikhs mourned all over the world; Bhindranwale overnight became the hero he had never been when alive. The Hindu reaction was one of satisfac-tion, if not jubilation. For a week or two it seemed as if Mrs. Gandhi had restored the popularity she had enjoyed after the Bangladesh war."

Operation Bluestar served to unite the members of the Sikh community in Canada, even those who had fallen away from the religion and ignored its politics. Almost overnight, it seemed, there was practically no one left in the Sikh community who held a moderate point of view. Their anger was given expression during a demonstration outside the Indian consulate office in Toronto the day after the Golden Temple invasion. This time there were no shootings. And the issue was not autonomy for the state of Punjab. There was only hatred on display at the corner of Yonge and Bloor.

Sikh women, who normally remain behind the scenes, stood on the sidewalk outside the office tower beating their chests as they chanted, "Indira the bitch, Indira the bitch." The men shouted, "Khoon ka badla, khoon sé léngé," meaning "The spill-ing of blood will be revenged with the taking of blood." Two Sikhs in the demonstration promoted a fund-raising drive for the assassination of Indira Gandhi. A sum of $30,000 had already been raised, they said, and a dozen local Sikhs had volunteered for suicide assassination missions.

Canadian Sikhs were not alone in their strong reaction to the Golden Temple raid. In England, Jagjit Singh Chauhan's call for Gandhi's assassination was carried on the World Service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). His message went out to

millions of Indians, and in his usual prescient manner, the self-appointed Khalistan president-in-exile predicted that Gandhi would be dead by the end of November.

The anger was also channelled into political action. Sikhs in Canada and the United States prepared for a meeting in July 1984 at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Their purpose was to form a large and powerful lobby group.

This meeting drew expatriate Sikhs from every corner of the world, including Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, all of Europe, the United States, Mexico and Canada. Between $1 and $2 million was raised to launch the World Sikh Organization (WSO).

Former U.S. congressman Jim Corman, a lawyer with offices in Washington, D.C., was hired to represent the WSO. As the group started lobbying Senate and House representatives, it used his plush offices near Capitol Hill as the WSO headquarters. Simultaneously, questions of human-rights repression in India began popping up from different political quarters in the U.S. and Canada. The WSO was getting off to a good start.

The WSO could attribute its immediate good fortune to its dynamic leadership. Not every radical Sikh in India died in Operation Bluestar. Among those who escaped the country was Jaswant Singh Bhullar. He was a retired Indian army major-general and hero of the 1971 war with Pakistan who had become disillusioned with the Indian government over its treatment of Sikhs. Bhullar had aligned himself with Bhindranwale but had left India when it became obvious that the Sikh sant was prepar-ing for his final battle. He arrived in New York just before the Golden Temple assault, with a mission from Bhindranwale to set up a world Sikh body to promote Khalistan. Bhullar quickly became a leader of the expatriate Sikhs. He joined forces with a Khalistan supporter already living in Washington, Ganga Singh Dhillon. Dhillon counted among his associates a variety of in-fluential politicians from both U.S. parties, including then Speaker of the House Thomas "Tip" O'Neill and General Daniel Graham, the former director of the Defence Intelligence Agency and head of High Frontier, the lobby group that convinced Presi-dent Ronald Reagan to adopt the Strategic Defence Initiative, better known as Star Wars. By the end of the conference at Madison Square Garden, Bhullar

was secretary-general of the World Sikh Organization and Dhillon its national president in the United States.

India, for its part, was prepared for such an outburst abroad. As early as 1982, it had parachuted spies into foreign lands under diplomatic cover at its embassies. India Today, that country's ver-sion of Time magazine and reputed to have the best information contacts in New Delhi, reported in 1985: "Indian Government intelligence on external groups has increased dramatically in the last two years, mainly because of the additional intelligence operatives from RAW and the IB [Intelligence Bureau] that have been posted under diplomatic cover in key embassies like Toron-to, Vancouver, London, Washington, New York, Bonn and Paris." After Operation Bluestar, the Indian plan was to hijack the Sikh separatist movement abroad. It would attempt to in-filtrate the WSO with agents posing as Sikh loyalists, or, as an alternative, it would create a radical counter-movement that would discredit the WSO.

One option for crippling the WSO was to have it install a leader who lacked credibility outside the extremist faction of the Sikh community. A fanatical leader spouting revolutionary rhetoric would have no influence in the capital of the United States.

Talwinder Singh Parmar, a radical Sikh nationalist from British Columbia, and two of his B.C. followers, Surjan Singh Gill and Ajaib Singh Bagri, tried to cross the border into the United States to make a grand appearance at the WSO's founding Madison Square Garden meeting. Parmar's name, however, was on the U.S. immigration department's list of undesirable aliens, and he was denied entry. His name had been passed along to American authorities by Canadian security forces, which had put him under twenty-four-hour surveillance. Bagri was permitted to attend the conference, where he proclaimed to the gathering that Sikhs would not be satisfied until fifty thousand Hindus were killed in retaliation for the invasion of the temple.

In later years, after tailing Parmar constantly and analyzing his every move, members of the RCMP and CSIS investigating the activities of the radical Sikh movement wondered about Parmar's motives.

According to agent Pat Olson, intelligence analysts thought that Parmar may have been an unwitting pup-pet of the Indian government. He may have been encouraged in his activities so as to discredit the Sikh's separatist goals. If, indeed, Parmar was India's pawn, its first gambit to hijack the post-Bluestar Sikh separatist movement failed when Parmar was prevented from attending the WSO founding conference.

That left the idea of establishing a counter-group. The Interna-tional Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) was started following the invasion of the Golden Temple. Its name was strikingly similar to the All-India Sikh Student Federation (AISSF), which had been around since 1944 as a youth wing of the predominant political party in Punjab, the Akali Dal. During the mid-1980s the AISSF was led by Amrik Singh, the son of Sant Kartar Singh, who had passed on the Gurdwara leadership to Bhindranwale. Under Amrik Singh, the AISSF was the leading extremist group in Pun-jab and membership in it was banned by the Indian government during its reign of terror. Its organizing secretary at the Golden Temple was a man named Harpal Singh Ghumman. He played a key role in establishing the International Sikh Youth Federation and oversaw its growth in Canada.

Ghumman, also known as Harjinder Pal Singh Nagra, had fled the Golden Temple at the start of Operation Bluestar. After it was over, he was one of a group of Sikhs who approached two of Bhindranwale's nephews living in the United Arab Emirates Jasbir Singh Rodé and his older brother, Lakhbir Singh Brar -with the idea of setting up the International Sikh Youth Federa-tion. Rodé travelled to England to launch the ISYF, and once the federation was running, he returned to Dubai. Ghumman be-came one of its leading spokesmen in England.

Rodé was enticed to travel to England again following the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her own bodyguards, a pair of trusted Sikhs, on October 31, 1984. The killing sparked fierce rioting by Hindus against the Sikhs in India. Thousands of Sikh men, women and children were butchered,

their bodies either burned or left by the roadside where packs of stray dogs gnawed on the carcasses. Outside India, Sikhs were enraged by the retaliatory killings. Rodé was being called on to turn that rage into greater support for an independent Khalistan.

Rodé, however, was taken into custody in London on his ar-rival in England and ordered deported. It was the beginning of an odyssey that would take him to numerous countries before landing him in jail in India. He returned to Dubai but, despite the fact that he had run a construction company there for eight years, was not allowed to remain in that country. He flew on to Karachi, Pakistan, where his entry was also blocked. He was finally held in custody in the Philippines. Accompanying Rodé on his transworld flights was Mohan Inder Singh, who, like Ghumman, had escaped the Golden Temple invasion.

According to court documents from Manila, Rodé was refused entry at every stop because the Indian government was after him.

India charged that Rodé was involved in the conspiracy that had organized Gandhi's assassination. One day before Rodé's December 24, 1984, arrival on Philippine Airline flight PR-741, the Indian embassy in Manila sent an urgent telex to the Philip-pine Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It read, in part: "Mr. Jasbir Singh is wanted in India in connection with the commission of a large number of antinational and terrorist activities as well as with the assassination of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi."

The Philippine authorities detained Rodé in the Fort Bonifacio jail outside Manila before sending him to India. Although never put on trial, he was held in custody in India until March 1988, when the Indian government declared that he had had nothing to do with the assassination plot.

Mohan Inder Singh, Rodé's travelling companion, was freed in Manila after an initial detention. Eventually he flew to British Columbia, where he joined forces with Ghumman. Ghumman had come to Canada, claiming refugee status, and was in the process of setting up a wing of the International Sikh Youth Federation. Like Ghumman, Mohan Inder Singh took on a new name, Pushpinder Singh, and he too claimed refugee status.

The ISYF leader in Canada was Lakhbir Singh Brar, Rodé's older brother. He had fled to Canada and claimed refugee status fol-lowing his brother's arrest, fearing that the same fate awaited him at the hands of Indian authorities.

Ghumman was working under suspicion within the Sikh com-munity. As he travelled to temples to promote the ISYF, he was accused at every stop of selling out Rodé. In England, Ghumman had been given the job of providing Rodé with a lawyer to fight the deportation order, but temple leaders charged that he had failed to do so until the very last minute. Ghumman denied that he had intentionally scuttled Rodé's chances of remaining in England. He defended himself by saying that there was no way of getting around the deportation order. Nevertheless, suspicions remained that he was working within the separatist movement as an agent for the Indian government.

Ghumman's escape from the Golden Temple just before the invasion was considered a bit of a mystery. He claimed that he had been sent on a mission to promote separatism. "Bhindran-wale had told us that those of us whose ammunition was used up must go. My bullets were finished so I went.... He wanted us to organize the people again and spread the message of Khalis-tan." There was, however, no dearth of weapons within the Golden Temple. It took the Indian army two days to carry all of them out of the shrine after the bloody battle.

A man named Ghumman, indeed, was working for the Indian government as an infiltrator of the Khalistan movement. He was interviewed at the Golden Temple by Satish Jacob, a reporter with the BBC news bureau in New Delhi who co-authored a book on the temple raid. In Toronto to promote the book in 1985, Jacob recalled Ghumman and confirmed that the man had been a plant within the temple for the Indian Central Bureau of Investigation. He also mentioned that the Ghumman he met had another name, Harjinder Nagra. Ghumman denies the allegations and insists that he is a Sikh loyalist,

although he did acknowledge meeting Jacob and escorting him to an AISSF meeting in the Golden Temple.

If, in fact, one of its agents was helping to shape the ISYF, the Indian government could keep track of the activities of Khalistan supporters among expatriate Sikhs. At the same time, in its at-tempts to convince the Canadian government to quash separatist support, it could point to the ISYF as evidence of the dangers of Sikh radicalism. In this respect, the Indian government's cause was helped in May 1985 when four Sikhs, two of them carrying ISYF membership cards, shot and seriously wounded a visiting Indian cabinet minister on Vancouver Island.

Aside from covert activities, the Indian government launched a public-relations exercise designed to explain to Sikhs worldwide the reasons for Operation Bluestar. In a video produced for this purpose, the raid was defended as a forceful, but just, response to terrorism. Unfortunately for India, however, the quality of the tapes was poor. Careless editing revealed several phony segments. In one scene, presumably taped several days after the invasion and Bhindranwale's death, an army of-ficer tells the camera that the shooting hasn't stopped from within the temple. There is a pause and he points in the direction of the purported shooting, but only after he points are the sounds of gunshots heard in the background.

India's High Commission in Ottawa and its embassy in Washington sent the video to every Singh they could find in North American telephone books, to every Gurdwara and Sikh society, and to key American and Canadian Hindus. Accom-panying the approximately fifty thousand cassettes was a glossy magazine entitled The Sikhs in Their Homeland - India, which praised the Sikhs' contribution to India and denounced the evil separatists, especially those outside India.

The project came in for strong criticism from the embittered Sikhs. India's acting high commissioner to Canada, P.K. Fabian, who had been pelted with eggs by Sikhs in Winnipeg after the temple invasion, reacted angrily to the suggestion that India as a poor country - should not be spending money (more than half a million dollars) on this sort of propaganda.

He defended the video as an honest attempt on the part of India to make known its views on Operation Bluestar.

By late 1984 the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, created in that year to take over responsibility for national security from the RCMP, was developing a more serious interest in the ac-tivities of the Sikh community. CSIS was particularly troubled by the militancy of the Sikh separatists, who were taking over temple politics in the wake of the Golden Temple invasion. The spy agency had two concerns: first, the potential for a violent outburst by the emotionally overwrought Sikhs; and second, the possibility that India would purposely provoke the Sikhs into committing acts of violence. India, which had been pressing the Canadian government without success to outlaw support for the separatist movement, would be able to suppress the Khalistan movement in Canada if its leaders could be convicted of serious crimes. By continuing to defame an already-maligned com-munity, it could hope to put an end to the massive financial and moral support that was flowing from Canada into Punjab.

It was exactly the same concern that had been raised two years earlier in the offices of the RCMP's Security Service in Toronto. At that time, the service had ignored the warnings of two Metro police intelligence officers, and it had later dismissed the proposal for an investigation made by one of its own senior members. By 1984 the rift between the Indian government and the Sikhs in Punjab and in Canada could no longer be ignored. An intelligence investigation into the activities of a few selected Canadian Sikh radicals had already started when CSIS was created. In early 1985, CSIS added a new element to its Sikh and East Indian intelligence reports the GOI connections. The ini-tials stood for the government of India, Canada's Common-wealth partner.

CSIS agents were slowly beginning to realize that the Indian government was operating covertly where it did not belong - on Canadian soil.

5

By the end of 1984, the government of India had plenty to worry about both internally and at the international level. The assault on the Golden Temple had galvanized the Sikh separatist movement as never before - morally, logistically and financially. For the first time, questions were being raised by congressmen in the United States and by members of Parliament in Canada about the harsh treatment of the Sikhs of India. The Sikhs, particularly the World Sikh Organization, were gaining a foothold in their lobbying efforts with politicians in both countries. They focused on the one topic that never fails to create concern in the hearts and minds of people in Canada and the U.S. human rights.

Since-retired Tory MP Lorne Greenaway, whose Cariboo-Chil-cotin riding in British Columbia contains a sizable Sikh popula-tion, addressed the House of Commons on June 13, 1985: "Mr. Speaker, last week marked the first anniversary of the storming of the Golden Temple.... For a year the Punjab State has been under martial law, and communication has been difficult. Many are concerned that serious transgressions of human rights have occurred and continue to take place in Punjab. Such organiza-tions as the International Red Cross and Amnesty International have been denied entrance to this State. The citizens of my riding are concerned."

On the previous day, powerful right-wing Republican senator Jesse Helms, a member of the foreign relations committee, was less subtle in his address to the U.S. Senate: "Profound religious conflict on the subcontinent resulted in the formation of the state of Pakistan and the state of Bangladesh, both Moslem countries.

If a just solution to the situation in the Punjab, the homeland of the Sikhs, is not found a similar process will inevitably occur."

Helms added: "I am disturbed that the Government of India in recent days has tried to prevent an American citizen and a leader in the Sikh struggle for religious freedom and

human rights from speaking at the National Press Club [in Washington] yesterday. According to press reports, Mr. [Rajiv] Gandhi threatened to cancel his own appearance before the National Press Club this Friday if Mr. Ganga Singh Dhillon were allowed to speak. I commend the National Press Club for upholding the principle of the freedom of the press and not bending to such untoward pressure. The American people have a right to know about the situation on the subcontinent and the grave conditions affecting the religious and human rights of minorities there.... The Government of India has sealed off the Punjab from foreign press for the past year and now gives the impression that it would like to seal off the National Press Club as well."

The political counsellor at India's embassy in Washington, Vijay Kumar, was an intelligence operative who investigated separatist links to various American politicians. In an interview at the time, he said this about the thirty right-wing senators who were supporting the Sikhs: "If they could, they would break India into many, many pieces. The Sikhs are fooling these Senators.... But the U.S. public stand is against terrorism and we'll see how far they'll go. The one thing that senators and others cannot condone is terrorism."

The answer to India's dilemma was to bring terrorism to North America via the Sikhs. If the Sikhs were reluctant, they could be persuaded, provoked and, if necessary, manipulated by agents provocateurs. The Indians believed that, given the events since the Osgoode Hall shootings in 1982, not to mention acts of violence in Britain that were linked to its Sikh community, the Western media and public were ready for the next phase of India's game plan. Sedate Canada would soon seemingly have its own school for terrorists.

54 Soft Target

The media would lap it up, as would the public and the politicians.

Located somewhere deep in the British Columbia woods, outside the city of Prince George, was one of the most formidable ter-rorist training camps in the world. Or so the story goes. It was a popular tale in 1985, of young Sikhs from across Canada and the United States flocking to the heavily guarded, highly secret site for training in deadly combat and suicide missions. The sound of automatic weapon fire was said to echo

through the thick forest over the grunts of hardened men learning the art of hand-to-hand fighting.

It was a story based on conjecture and one many Canadians, especially within the media, wanted to believe. The plot was filled with enough intrigue that it had to be true, argued those who were predisposed to believing its authenticity. The whereabouts of the camp was never verified independently, but according to the logic of the day, that didn't mean it did not exist. The lack of hard evidence only allowed rumour and fear to add to the legend of the mysterious terrorist training centre.

In fact, the B.C. camp never existed. It was a "creation" of the Indian government as a part of its disinformation program to discredit the Sikh separatist movement outside India. India went to great lengths to support the canard, even to the point of setting up a phony leader of the camp and claiming that it had provided Canadian External Affairs officials with photographs of the train-ing site.

No less an authority than the highly respected India Today newsmagazine was duped by the Indian government's stories of terrorist training on Canada's West Coast. The Babbar Khalsa, a militant Vancouver-based Sikh sect headed by Talwinder Singh Parmar, was behind the training camp, India Today proclaimed in its September 15, 1985, edition.

The Babbar Khalsa, the magazine erroneously reported, "has launched an all-out effort to recruit Sikhs abroad for the creation of Khalistan through a Khalistan Liberation Army to be trained and armed abroad. In pursuit of this aim, in February, 1982 the organization hired Johann Vanderhorst, a veteran mercenary who had fought in Rhodesia, to train Sikh recruits in British Columbia. Vanderhorst hired fellow mercenaries by putting ad-vertisements in Canadian papers offering them salaries of U.S. $1,250 a month to train people in the use of weapons and combat techniques.... The Indian government obtained clandestine pic-tures of the training camp in British Columbia which have been handed over to the Canadian government."

The Vanderhorst name and the training camp myth were repeated in the 1985 book Derivative Assassination: Who Killed Indira Gandhi?, compiled by the "Editors of

Executive Intelligence Review." The book contends that the Khalistan movement had become "integrated into the ranks of Soviet-directed internation-al terrorism." It explains: "This hypothesis is corroborated by the training that had been given to the Sikhs in British Columbia by South African (native) mercenary Johann Vanderhorst. In this camp, members of the Babbar Khalsa, Dal Khalsa, the Dashmesh Regiment, and the Sikh Student Federation were trained alongside the Red Brigades, the Armenian ASALA, and Pales-tinian terrorists.... Vanderhorst is part of a circuit of terrorist trainers and gun runners crisscrossing the U.S.-Canada border. His training camp, named Mercenary Training Facilities, was sitting outside of Prince George, British Columbia."

These astounding claims should be put into perspective. The Executive Intelligence Review is published by Lyndon LaRouche, a bizarre right-wing, anti-Semitic and anti-Communist crusader in the United States. LaRouche's followers became famous in the 1980s for their propoganda network and for their fund-raising efforts. The cult-following LaRouche attracted was large enough to boost him to the fringe of national politics, and he has even attempted to run for the office of U.S. president.

CSIS and the RCMP scoured British Columbia for the camp. They tailed suspected Sikh militants, hoping they would lead them to the terrorist training centre. Both agencies were pressed by the Indian government and External Affairs to find and destroy the camp. Canadian officials, already under pressure from the Indian government for allegedly protecting "terrorists" (as India defined Canadian Sikh separatists), wanted action on the camp quickly. As long as the tales of the training camp remained in circulation, Canada would have to face the accusa-tion that it condoned the schooling of terrorists.

In retrospect, CSIS agents Pat Olson and Fred Gibson believe that the Indian government's information on the training camp, passed along to External Affairs, was just another phony lead in a general pattern of disinformation designed to discredit the Sikhs. Two highly placed CSIS agents in Vancouver, who took part in the search for the camp, have agreed with that conclusion. A frustrated corporal with the National Crime Intelligence Ser-vice (NCIS) of the RCMP, the wing that investigates terrorist threats, was bitterly sarcastic: "You find Johann Vanderhorst and I'll get you an informant's fee

of one million dollars!" (The closest match was not a person at all but a tiny town a hundred kilometres west of Prince George along the Yellowhead Highway by the name of Vanderhoof. The town has a large Sikh popula-tion.)

By the time CSIS agents gave up the search for the phantom camp, they had become familiar with the frustration that went along with any investigative request issuing from the Indian government. After the assassination of Indira Gandhi in October 1984, Indian diplomats repeatedly told External Affairs that the Sikhs were using Canada as a base for a gunrunning operation for the Khalistani fighters in Punjab. In late 1984 the Toronto CSIS office on Front Street adjacent to the CN Tower received an Indian government note claiming that Indian intelligence had uncovered a gunrunning plot out of the Niagara Peninsula. The Indians asserted that the Sikhs involved were using a gun dealer in the tiny fruit-belt community of Winona to export modern weapons to Punjab.

Fred Gibson remembers that note well and the incredulous faces of the agents asked to probe this latest GOI caper. But Ottawa was insistent that an investigation should be conducted good relations with a Commonwealth partner, after all, were at stake. A parallel investigation by the RCMP was also ordered. The twin investigations came to a quick and comical ending. A pair of Sikhs, it turned out, had bought expensive hunting rifles and had had them sent to relatives in Punjab. The dealer had a licence to export weapons, and this supposedly subversive gun-running operation had been accomplished with connections through Canada Post and the Indian postal service. The guns had been sent by parcel post.

If terrorist training camps, gunrunning allegations, Talwinder Singh Parmar and the Babbar Khalsa were not enough to keep Canada's domestic spies busy, there were the reports of terrorist threats that streamed into CSIS offices courtesy of External Af-fairs again originating with the Indian government. Gibson and Olson remember notes that dealt with various Indian instal-lations supposedly in danger: the High Commission, the consu-lates, trade offices, the businesses and homes of prominent Hindus, and Air-India.

In the spring of 1985, the Indian government began issuing notes to External Affairs emphasizing that the first anniversary of the Golden Temple invasion would arrive in

early June. The Indians were particularly nervous that some form of retaliation would be staged abroad. The Canadian government boosted security around the Indian embassy and consulates.

One of the Indian notes in early June expressed special concern over the safety of its weekly Air-India flight from Toronto through Montreal to New Delhi, with a refuelling stop in Lon-don. The service was new, inaugurated with flight 182 out of Toronto on January 19, 1985. From the time it arrived each Satur-day at its Terminal 2 gate at Pearson International Airport until its departure later in the evening,

the RCMP stationed a constable inside a distinctive blue-and-yellow cruiser parked beneath the plane's right wing. Another RCMP cruiser patrolled the airport apron while the plane was on the ground. Other constables patrolled the Air-India check-in counter and watched from the loading bridge as passengers boarded the airplane. Much to the relief of CSIS, which had become skeptical of the legitimacy of India's frantic claims of terrorist threats, the anniversary of the temple invasion passed without incident.

Along with all the futile investigations at the behest of the Indian government, there was the Camper mercenary affair in-volving Sikhs in the United States. In November 1984 a group of Sikhs looking for training in guerrilla warfare approached Frank Camper, a Vietnam veteran who in 1987 would be jailed in California on bombing charges. Two of the Sikhs were Lal Singh and Ammand Singh, who had gotten off a ship in Florida earlier in the year and had entered the U.S. with papers for transfer to another ship. Instead, they remained in the U.S and moved to New York City.

While training the Sikhs at a camp he ran in Dolomite, Alabama, Camper learned of an assassination plot against Rajiv Gandhi, to be carried out during his trip to New York in June 1985. Camper alerted federal authorities. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) arrested Gurpratap Singh Birk, a New York computer scientist, and four others in May 1985. They were charged with plotting to assassinate the chief minister of Haryana, a state neighbouring Punjab, who was in New Orleans for eye surgery. Birk and another man were also charged in regard to the assassination plot directed at Rajiv Gandhi.

While Camper was working with the FBI, he used a mid-dleman in order to offer his services as an agent to the Indians. Indian authorities said that this offer was turned down, although the negotiations went on for several weeks prior to the May arrests. Said Camper: "I had warned the Indians that Air-India would be bombed. I had warned of other targets and other to violence.

They ignored the warnings or it became bureaucratical-ly buried.... I was fairly specific in my warnings.... I had trans-ferred some information to show them I had access ... intelligence they did not [have] at the time.... I think the Indian Government was simply sitting on its own agencies and did not want action."

It is difficult to assess the accuracy of the claim by the self-serv-ing Camper, a claim which he made in hindsight of the Air-India flight 182 crash on June 23, 1985 that killed 329 people off the coast of Ireland. What does seem curious, however, is that the Indian government, while bent on convincing Canadian authorities that a Sikh terrorist threat was real, rejected Camper's claims. Could it be that the Indians, who could control the pace of their own contrived disinformation plan, had no wish or need to complicate matters even more with information outside its own control?

In Canada, two other men were providing the RCMP with sensitive information in the year before the Air-India crash. One was an RCMP informant, Paul Besso, a twenty-seven-year-old former Canadian navy explosives expert. Besso had infiltrated a group of Vancouver Sikhs who made regular forays into Califor-nia. In California, Besso met a Sikh who supposedly was U.S. head of the International Sikh Youth Federation. Besso claimed that the group was interested in obtaining automatic weapons and 75 per cent pure dolomite plastic explosives to blow up bridges in India. According to Besso, one of his Vancouver cohorts, Gurmel Singh, "went into a bookstore and asked the woman for a book on how to build bombs. You know, [he had] a long beard and a turban and he wants a book on bombs!" Besso claimed that when he asked the Sikhs how they intended to smuggle the explosives and weapons into India, a Sikh he iden-tified as Harjit Singh Khunkhun replied that he had once worked for an Indian intelligence agency and so had his uncle.

Besso was eventually dropped by the RCMP because he had not produced what they had hired him to find -

clear evidence in support of an allegation that the Khalistan movement was being funded by the drug trade. Looking for employment, Besso turned to the Indian consulate in Toronto in 1986. In a ninety-minute meeting with Vice-Consul Brij Mohan Lal, he offered to use his connections with the Sikhs to obtain information. At the time, Besso maintained that he had become a born-again Chris-tian and was working in a vineyard in the Niagara region. He and Lal struck a deal, he said, but he was scared away from the next meeting at the consulate when he spotted what he believed were either RCMP or CSIS officers near the building.

Besso had warned the RCMP about a bomb plot against Air-India. A similar warning came from a Sikh jailed in Vancouver; his lawyer had hoped to make a deal with the Crown prosecutor to reduce his client's twelve-year sentence on theft, fraud and attempted murder charges. Vancouver lawyer George An-gelomatis said that his client, Harmail Singh Grewal, a liquor store employee, told CSIS and the RCMP of a plot to bomb Air-India. He said that a co-prisoner from Quebec had obtained details by pretending to have influence with officials at Mirabel International Airport in Montreal. Air-India used Mirabel and a bomb could be planted there. The lawyer wanted the RCMP to grant Grewal immunity, and when no deal was made, his client wouldn't talk. While Grewal contended that his information was specific, the police said it was not. The information was, how-ever, another item to add to the growing burden of tips mounting up before the security forces.

The security forces, aware that the potential for violence was real, given Sikh anger after Operation Bluestar and the massacre of Sikhs in the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination, found it an exasperating business to deal with the growing mass of leads and information. Olson recalled: "Everything was examined, reviewed, screened by CSIS. If anything minimal was found, it went to the embassy. There was an indication that something was targeted.

It could be the embassy, the consulates, the trade of-fices, Air-India, influential Hindus.... We didn't know where to begin."

Eventually, CSIS and the RCMP tired of chasing dead ends. "We'd investigate," Gibson said, "and find out there was noth-ing, or, like in Winona, there was a little gun shop that was legally exporting weapons. It was all aboveboard. One of the letters mentioned specifically 'Indian installations such as Air-India.' In that context, we knew there was a fear. But it soon became a case of the boy who cried wolf. They had worn the service down mentally to an extent that when it [the Air India crash] happened, it took everyone by surprise."

6

The Third Man remained behind in the brown Ford as Talwinder Singh Parmar and Inderjit Singh Reyat walked into the woods outside of Duncan, a small lumber-mill town on Van-couver Island. The date was June 4, 1985-two days before the first anniversary of the attack on the Golden Temple and nineteen days before Air-India flight 182 blew up off the coast of Ireland.

Reyat, later dubbed the "Duncan mechanic," was one of Parmar's devoted followers and a member of his Babbar Khalsa sect. It was Reyat who lugged the items they had brought with them, including a bulky twelve-volt battery, as they trudged deeper into the woods.

They were about to test a homemade bomb Reyat had put together at Parmar's request, he claimed later. Their activity in the isolated woods between Duncan and Lake Cowichan would later be a focal point for CSIS and RCMP investigators. These Sikhs were to become the security forces' leading suspects in the Air-India crash. They were also suspected of being behind the nearly simultaneous explosion of a bomb inside a piece of lug-gage unloaded from a CP Air flight at Narita Airport outside Tokyo.

The Babbar Khalsa leader and the unidentified Third Man had been tailed since early that morning from Parmar's home in Burnaby to the ferry docks in Vancouver. Two members of the CSIS watcher service, Larry Lowe and Lynne McAdams, made the ferry-crossing with them to Nanaimo, where the two Sikhs were met by a Joginder Singh Gill and driven south to Reyat's home in Duncan.

The members of the watcher service had no trouble identifying Parmar and Reyat, but they could not place the other man, a young, slim, turbaned Sikh with a straggly beard. Lowe and McAdams made a colossal blunder in failing to take a camera along. Had they done so, they could have surreptitiously photographed the newest character among Parmar's circle of friends. It would have been easy, since the ferry was full of tourists taking snapshots.

The watchers kept their distance as the three Sikhs drove off in Reyat's car, which sported licence plates reading "I REYAT." The Sikhs stopped at the Duncan Auto Electric Marine shop, where Reyat worked as a mechanic, and then continued on their journey towards Lake Cowichan.

When the trio pulled off to the side on Hillcrest Road, the watchers were at a disadvantage. In such a desolate area, they could not follow too closely for fear of being spotted. Lowe and McAdams did not see what went on in the woods but they did hear a noise. It resembled the sound of a single shot from a hunting rifle, Lowe said in his report on the day's surveillance. Parmar and Reyat marched out of the woods, climbed into the car, and the trio motored back to Duncan. Lowe made a hurried search of the woods, looking for a shell casing. He found nothing and was forced to rush back so they could continue tailing Par-mar.

Lowe and McAdams followed Parmar when he left Duncan to return to his home. The Third Man remained behind with Reyat - beyond the prying eye of the watcher service. He would never be seen again by CSIS agents.

Meanwhile, the process that would lead to the Air-India and CP bombings was taking shape in Vancouver.

64 Soft Target

Tickets were purchased for two CP Air flights that would travel in opposite diréc-tions on June 22.

On June 19, Martine Donahue, a CP Air ticket agent in Van-couver, took a telephone call from a man who identified himself as Mr. Singh. During the half-hour conversation, the caller booked two flights for June 22 in the names of two other Sikhs.

One reservation was in the name of a Mohinderbel Singh for CP Air flight 003 from Vancouver to Tokyo and connecting with Air-India flight 301 headed for Bangkok. The second booking was made on behalf of a Jaswand Singh for CP Air flight 086 to Dorval Airport in Montreal. From Dorval, Jaswand Singh would have to make his own way to Mirabel, the international airport outside of Montreal, to join Air-India flight 182. A telephone number was left with the ticket agent, a standard procedure in making airline

reservations. Donahue recalled that the man was well acquainted with flight schedules out of Vancouver and with Air-India flights at other airports. The man knew, for instance, that flight 003 was the best flight to Tokyo for linking up with Air-India to Bangkok. Even her ticket computer had not told her that, Donahue informed investigators.

Within two hours, however, another CP Air ticket agent received a call cancelling the Vancouver-Montreal reservation for Jaswand Singh. Instead, his booking was changed to CP Air flight 60 to Toronto, where he was wait-listed on the fully booked Air-India flight 182.

A heavy-set man believed to be a Sikh arrived at a CP Air downtown Vancouver office to pay for the tickets on June 20. As he was not under surveillance by the CSIS watcher service, his identity remains a mystery. He was described by ticket agent Gerald Duncan as round-faced, about five feet ten inches tall and weighing more than two hundred pounds. He wore a tightly wound, mustard-coloured turban, and his slightly graying beard was gathered in a mesh net and tucked neatly beneath his chin.

He first changed the names on the reservations. Now, an L. Singh was booked to travel to Tokyo and Bangkok, with a return ticket for an unspecified date. An M. Singh was listed as the passenger to Toronto and on Air-India's waiting list.

Every plot has pitfalls for its conspirators and this was no exception. As Duncan tallied the cost of the two full-fare tickets, the man slipped his right hand into his pants pocket and pulled out a thick wad of cash, folded in half, in denominations of hundreds and fifties. His hand, with a diamond ring on the middle finger, froze momentarily when Duncan told him the total fare.

"He didn't have enough money," Duncan recalled under hyp-nosis for the RCMP. He had agreed to the hypnosis because he hoped to provide investigators with some fact hidden away in his subconscious, but there were no miraculous revelations. The man, who wore a plaid shirt and beige windbreaker, cancelled the return ticket from Bangkok to Vancouver. Still, the fare for the two tickets amounted to $3,005. The man laid the cash

on the office counter and pocketed the tickets. He disappeared out of the front door and into the morning crowd at the busy intersec-tion of Burrard and Georgia streets.

The ticket purchaser, however, did leave behind one addition-al clue. He changed the telephone number where the ticket holders could be reached.

The first number had once belonged to Hardial Singh Johal, a Vancouver Sikh known for his moderate political views. He had been brutally beaten once by alleged Sikh militants as he went to raise the Canadian flag on the pole outside the school where he worked. Investigators later appeared to agree with Johal that the terrorist bombers were trying to create a false path for the RCMP. Nevertheless, they questioned him in July and August and raided his house in November, seizing his diary, other papers and his personal book of telephone numbers.

The second number was traced to the city's Ross Street Gurdwara, home to the largest Sikh congregation in Canada.

Its members held strong views on the creation of Khalistan and fiercely supported the struggle for independence. The RCMP had difficulty believing that the bombers would leave such an ob-vious trail.

On the morning of the June 22 flights, a man identifying him-self as Manjit Singh telephoned CP Air and asked if his stand-by ticket on Air-India flight 182 from Toronto had yet been con-firmed. It had not. Aziz Premji, the agent who took the call, went to great trouble to find an alternate flight for Manjit Singh to take to New Delhi. Premji offered to send him to New Delhi through Tokyo, but Manjit Singh was adamant about travelling to Toron-to. He had friends from Winnipeg on Air-India flight 182 and wanted to join them, he insisted.

During the conversation, the caller spoke in English, Punjabi and Hindi strewn with Punjabi phrases. All the while, he was persistent in trying to get his baggage transferred from the CP Air flight onto Air-India even though he held only a stand-by ticket. Premji told him it was not possible.

Within a few hours, one person CP check-in clerk Jeannie Adams did see and speak with the two men who actually planted the bombs on the airplanes. But the information she later provided the RCMP was of little use.

Adams was not supposed to be working at the CP Air check-in counter at Vancouver International Airport on the morning of Saturday, June 22. She had agreed to switch shifts as a favour for a co-worker. The airline placed her at station 26, the counter for holders of Empress Class tickets, a service one step above economy but not quite first class. The morning was especially busy for CP Air clerks. There were long lineups at the check-in counters, and even the Empress Class passengers waited twenty minutes before reaching the counter. Adams, like the rest of the clerks, was rushed, and she had little patience for anyone causing a delay.

She remembered the man carrying the ticket made out to M. Singh only because of his unrelenting demand to check his luggage through to Air-India.

"It was a very busy morning," she later told the RCMP. "And we had lineups from the check-in counter back to our ticket counters.... It was extremely busy in which I had maybe thirty people in my lineup or more."

Even though he did not hold an Empress Class ticket, M. Singh stood in the long line leading to Jeannie Adam's counter. He carried a briefcase. A single piece of zippered, soft-sided luggage lay on the floor at his feet. As the line slowly shuffled forward, M. Singh reached down, grasped the handle and placed the suitcase slightly ahead of himself. When he reached the counter, Adams went through the routine of entering his ticket informa-tion into her computer and presenting him with a boarding pass. She was, at first, adamant that his luggage could not be checked through to Air-India flight 182 until he held a confirmed seat. She wrote out a claim ticket marked with the YYZ code in thick, black lettering for Toronto and wrapped it around the handle of the suitcase.

M. Singh, however, would not be deterred. He lied, pleaded and finally bluffed to get his way. Adams relented when the man suddenly turned to walk away from the counter to get assistance from his "brother." She decided that she did not need any further delays.

Adams re-created the tense standoff at the ticket counter for RCMP investigators: "He wanted his bag checked to Delhi. And I said, 'I can't do that, sir, because you're not confirmed on the flight.' He said, Yes, I am confirmed, and he said, 'This is my ticket.' And I said, 'Your ticket doesn't read that you're con-firmed,' and I said, 'I can't do it.'

"He said, 'But then I'll have to pick my baggage up (in Toron-to] and transfer it.' And I said, 'I realize that but we're not sup-posed to check your baggage through.' He said, 'But I phoned Air-India and I am confirmed on that flight.' And that can be true for people who don't understand airline procedures. But if the passenger had phoned Air-India and he was confirmed on the file he might have been confirmed on their computer but not on ours….

"And I said, 'You have to check with Air-India when you get to Toronto.' He continued on that he'd have to transfer his bag which is a hassle at Toronto airport. It's busy. And he said, 'I phoned Air-India. I am confirmed on it.' And I explained to him about the file. And he said, 'Wait, I'll go get my brother for you.'

"And the lineups were so busy I thought, You gotta be crazy. And I said to him, 'I don't have time to talk to your brother.' Like, he started to move away from my lineup and leaving his baggage and his ticket.

"[I] said, 'I don't have time to talk to your brother.' So he came back and I said, 'Okay, I'll check it through but you have to check with Air-India when you get to Toronto.' I musta said that five, six times. Even the man behind him said to the man, You have to check with Air-India when you get to Toronto....'

"And so I remember ripping the [XYZ baggage claim] tag off and I remember thinking, You jerk, you're taking up my time."

Jeannie Adams recalled that the man was between thirty-five and forty, had an East Indian accent and wore a suit and tie. "He wasn't dressed in Zeller's-type clothes or with a plaid shirt and polka dot tie like sometimes...," she said, suddenly snipping off the rest

of her thought. He did not have a beard or wear a turban but had "longish" hair that curled down over his ears. "I remem-ber thinking he had a rounder, kind of smiley-looking face. He was kind of sparkly-eyed... He's got a cute little face."

The man who stood behind M. Singh in the line, a former general manager of Toronto's Pearson International Airport, described him as "a prosperous East Indian businessman, well attired." He could not, however, describe the man's luggage other than to say it was a "conventional two-suiter."

All Jeannie Adams could remember about M. Singh's luggage was that it was zippered and not excessively heavy, certainly not beyond the seventy-pound limit. And she thought, although she could not be positive, that the bag was a burgundy colour.

It was not passed through an x-ray machine, since Transport Canada's airport security policy at the time stated that only luggage carried on to an aircraft by passengers required screening.

Adams met with an RCMP artist and provided details for a composite sketch of M. Singh based on her confrontation with him at the ticket counter. In a tape-recorded interview with another RCMP investigator, she recalled a shocking revelation made to her by the artist. After the first picture was completed, he asked if she remembered anything about L. Singh. According to a transcript of the recorded interview, Adams said: "He said, 'Now what do you remember about the other guy?' And I said, 'What other guy?' [He said] 'Just the guy who went Vancouver-Tokyo....' And I said, 'Well, why should I remember him?' And he said, 'Because you checked him in, too, and I just went -I said, 'You gotta be kidding?" "

It wasn't until that moment that Adams discovered she had checked two pieces of luggage carrying bombs on to two separate flights. Adams's working signature her personal computer code number was printed on the tickets held by M. Singh and L. Singh. She had absolutely no recollection of L. Singh. He was just another forgettable passenger among the thousands who passed through the CP Air counters that day without incident.

CP Air flight 60 to Toronto, scheduled to leave Vancouver at 9 a.m. (Pacific Daylight Time), departed eighteen minutes late. M. Singh was not on board.

CP Air flight 003 to Tokyo, scheduled to leave Vancouver at 1:15 p.m. (PDT), departed seventeen minutes late. L. Singh was not on board.

Both CP Air flights arrived at their destination without inci-dent. Flight 60 landed in Toronto just twelve minutes late. Flight 003 touched down in Tokyo fourteen minutes early.

At Toronto's Lester B. Pearson International Airport, baggage handlers sorted through the luggage coming out of the storage compartments of flight 60 and routed the suitcase belonging to M. Singh to Air-India.

70Soft Target

Added to the pile of luggage belonging to twenty-one other travellers from western Canada who were con-necting with flight 182, it was stored for security clearance before being loaded aboard the 747 jumbo jet. Air-India's security policy stipulated that every piece of luggage was to be examined both checked and carry-on-before it was placed in the hold of any of the state-owned aircraft.

Because of the perceived threat against the airline, Air-India sent a security officer from its New York office to Toronto on June 22 to oversee its loading operations in Toronto and Montreal. Still, there was confusion at Pearson. Air-India's Toronto station manager was away on vacation, and according to a Canadian Aviation Safety Board report, "The evidence does not clearly establish who had been assigned to replace the station manager and assume his duties."

at In the luggage-sorting department, private security guards were assigned by Air-India's security manager to pass all the baggage through an x-ray machine for screening. The Burns security company was under contract to Transport Canada the joint expense of the airlines using the two terminals provide guards at the airport. The guards were paid low wages and quite often were not given the primitive security training program designed by Transport Canada. to

On this particular day, the x-ray machine worked only inter-mittently for the security guards and finally stopped functioning altogether. (Oddly, it worked fine the following day. Repair tech-nicians guessed that it had broken down temporarily because it had been moved.)

Security guard Jimmy Post took a PD-4 hand-held explosives sniffer and began examining bags, but the Air-India security chief, John D'Souza, did not approve of the way he was using it. Demonstrating the device, D'Souza lit a match and held it about an inch from the tip of the sniffer. It emitted a loud, piercing sound like a scream. He handed the wand back to Post and ordered him to pass it across the edges of every piece of luggage that came down the conveyor belt.

James Frederick Post had worked for Burns security for eight months when he was assigned to Pearson Airport. He had not been given the Transport Canada airport security training pro-gram. "I was taken out and dumped in and told to do the job of checking baggage.... I haven't had any training at the airport," he said in a statement taken by the RCMP. He refused to sign the statement.

Post switched the PD-4 sniffer off as he waited for each bag to make its way slowly towards him along the conveyor belt. It beeped each time he turned it on or off. The sniffer beeped once more as he passed it along the side of one suitcase. Post and other guards around him ignored it. The bag was maroon, the same colour as the suitcase Jeannie Adams believed she had checked through to Air-India for M. Singh.

"Post was checking around one bag's zipper when it beeped," said fellow security guard Nasseem Nanji in an affidavit to the RCMP. "This bag was soft-sided and the zipper went all the way around it. I believe it was maroon in colour. James Post did a second check and it beeped low in volume when it passed near the zipper's lock. But the beeper wasn't making a long whistling sound like it had when John [D'Souza], the Air-India man, demonstrated the sniffer to us. So we let the bag pass."

The PD-4 model sniffer was of suspect value from the moment Air-India began flying out of Pearson on January 19, 1985. The sniffer was displayed at a security meeting that included Air-India, RCMP and Transport Canada representatives the day before the

airline's inaugural flight. According to Canadian Avia-tion Safety Board records, an RCMP officer tested the device. "The test revealed that it could not detect a small container of gunpowder until the head of the sniffer was moved to less than an inch from the gunpowder. Also, the next day the sniffer was tried on a piece of C4 plastic explosives and it did not function even when it came directly in contact with the explosive sub-stance," the safety board report said, adding, "It is not known if this was the same sniffer used on 22 June 1985."

72 Soft Target

Flight 182 was late in leaving Pearson Airport. Two weeks earlier, an engine had failed on an Air-India flight coming into Toronto and had had to be replaced. The failed engine had been sitting in an Air Canada hangar since then. Air-India asked Air Canada to mount the engine as a fifth pod on flight 182 so it could be returned to India for repairs. The procedure was not unusual, although it gave the plane the odd appearance of having three engines beneath one wing and two beneath the other. The mas-sive Boeing 747 could carry the extra engine without any prob-lem, but its air speed and altitude would be restricted.

Parts of the engine were to be stored in the rear cargo hold, but workers had trouble getting the engine cowling inside. A cargo door had to be removed from its hinges before the cowling could be placed inside the broad belly of the plane. The door was then replaced. All this work held up the airplane's departure.

Flight 182 finally left Pearson at 8:15 p.m. (Eastern Daylight Time), one hour and forty minutes behind schedule. Awaiting flight 182 at Mirabel, security guards removed from baggage carts three suitcases belonging to passengers boarding at Mirabel which had failed to clear the security screening. The bags were not allowed on the plane and were checked later, but no ex-plosive devices were found. The most lethal item in any of the bags was a travel iron. After flight 182 touched down at Mirabel, some minor work was done on the piggy-backed fifth engine to improve the plane's aerodynamics. Flight 182 took off at 10:18 p.m., heading towards the Atlantic Ocean.

The morning sunshine was washing over flight 182 as it cruised closer to the coast of Ireland. Although it was still the middle of the night in Canada, the Air-India flight

attendants were preparing breakfast for the stirring passengers. The flight's progress was being tracked by air traffic controllers at Shannon Airport in Ireland.

Flight 182 was one hour away from its refuelling stop at Lon-don when it crashed into the ocean. A bomb exploded at 7:14 a.m. Greenwich Mean Time (3:14 a.m. in Toronto),

immediately severing the aircraft's electrical system and crippling its flight controls.

The blast from the front cargo hold sent a shockwave beneath the cabin floor, ripping seats from their supports and violently tossing at least a dozen passengers against the ceiling. The mas-sive airplane lost all ability to fly and plunged in an arc towards the ocean from a height of thirty-one thousand feet.

Twisting and turning as it dove out of control, the stresses caused the tail of the plane to break off, like a twig snapping in two. Passengers spilled from the gaping hole into the cold, thin air. Mercifully, most people quickly lost consciousness from the lack of oxygen more than five miles above the ocean. Many were dead long before the airplane struck the water, but according to autopsies performed in Cork, Ireland, on the recovered bodies, at least two people drowned.

The glowing green diamond that was flight 182 on the air traffic controllers' radar screens at Shannon Airport faded away to nothing. All 329 passengers and crew were killed 120 miles west of Ireland.

A Canadian Aviation Safety Board investigation presented a case backing the theory that an explosion in the front cargo compartment was the cause of the crash. But because it had relied on circumstantial evidence, the safety board remained cautious in its final report, stating that "the evidence does not support any other conclusion."

Precisely fifty-five minutes before the crash of flight 182, a bomb exploded in a baggage transit building at Narita Airport outside of Tokyo, killing two workers. The luggage was being carted from CP Air flight 003 to Air-India flight 301 to Bangkok. Japanese forensic experts gathered minute pieces of plastic and metal from the area around the

explosion and from the bodies of the two dead baggage handlers. Their painstaking work showed that the explosives had been packed inside a stereo tuner contained in a suitcase.

Their amazingly detailed reconstruction revealed that the stereo tuner was a Sanyo model FMT 611k.

Inderjit Singh Reyat had purchased a Sanyo model FMT 611k from a Woolworth's store in Duncan, B.C., on June 5, but it was no longer in his possession. He had given it to the Third Man, the straggly-bearded Sikh who had waited patiently in the car while Reyat and Parmar tested an explosive device in the woods on June 4.

Reyat was arrested by the RCMP in Duncan as he drove home from work on the evening of November 6, 1985. By that time, investigators had traced the sale of the stereo tuner through a credit card receipt retained by the Woolworth's store.

During his nearly seven-hour interrogation, Reyat hedged his answers to nearly every question first put to him. He spent a considerable time denying setting off an explosive device in the woods until he learned that he and Parmar and the Third Man had been tailed. He even spent the first part of the interrogation refusing to admit that he knew anyone by the name of Parmar, although he may have had difficulty with the RCMP officer's pronunciation.

But Reyat never denied for a moment that he was the person who purchased the stereo tuner.

Reyat did not provide his two interrogators, RCMP corporals Doug Henderson and Glen Rockwell, with all the information they wanted to hear. "I want you to think about a lot of things and I want you to be honest with me," Henderson told Reyat in the early stages of questioning. "I want to get the true facts, though, I want to put everything in its proper perspective. I know you want to tell me the truth. I can tell by looking at you."

Henderson, assigned to the Duncan RCMP detachment, was slightly acquainted with Reyat and through most of the question-ing tried to put him at ease. Rockwell, an investigator from the Vancouver office, played the opposite role.

He sat sullenly through most of the questioning, occasionally offering his blunt opinions to Reyat.

"Mr. Reyat, I've been sitting back here listening and I've lost count at how many times you have not told the truth. Now just try a little harder," Rockwell scowled at one point, hoping Reyat would become more forthcoming with information

Late in the interview, as they approached midnight, Rockwell, after repeated denials from Reyat, directly accused the mechanic of causing the Air-India crash and the Narita explosion.

"Inderjit, like you I'm a God-fearing man, in my own way," Rockwell began. "... I feel very strongly that you had something to do with bombing the plane to India, or over Ireland, and you had something to do with the bombing of the plane in Japan or the baggage in Japan.

I'm not asking for an explanation right now. I'm just telling you what I think. That's my feeling and that's why I'm here because I feel very strong in my mind that you are respon-sible."

Henderson consoled Reyat, almost apologizing for Rockwell's aggressive behaviour. As the accusations poured out against him, Reyat had difficulty finding a moment when he could in-terject with his denial. "I, I didn't do it," he said, stumbling over the words in a rush to get them out.

Throughout the interrogation, Henderson had hinted that Reyat might not have known about the plot against Air-India. Towards the end, he again brought up his theory, hoping that Reyat would see it as a way out of a dilemma. He came close to implying Reyat could get off the hook if he would only admit what others had plotted.

"They conceived a plan to do something. They needed some assistance with a certain part of their plan and seeked [sic] your assistance," Henderson suggested. "Maybe you didn't know ex-actly what all you were doing... but they sought your assistance and you

gave them assistance.... You, you did give them assistance. And by helping them, you have helped to kill all those people."

There was a pause long enough for Reyat to speak and when he did he was emphatic: "I didn't help, I didn't. I didn't help killing those people. No way."

While Reyat was being questioned, other RCMP officers were raiding his home. They discovered a gun with the serial number filed off and a plastic bag containing a gooey, gray substance that turned out to be the remnants of the explosive material from the insides of several sticks of dynamite.

When Reyat was later confronted with this evidence, he tried to explain that pistol shooting was a hobby of his and that it had led to a similar interest in dynamite, a common substance in the lumber and mining industries of Vancouver Island. Reyat even-tually admitted that out of curiosity he had set off a couple of sticks of dynamite two years earlier. He claimed that the leftover plastic bag of gray gel was old, but he could not explain the statement another Duncan resident, a well driller named Ken-neth Slade, made to the RCMP. Slade told investigators that he had given Reyat up to eight sticks of dynamite and several electrical blasting caps in late May 1985.

Was it not dynamite, the RCMP wanted to know, that Reyat and Parmar exploded in the woods on June 4 while the Third Man waited in the car? Reyat insisted that he had not exploded any dynamite on June 4. He reluctantly agreed that he had set off an explosive device for Parmar out in the woods and hesitant-ly described his intentions.

Parmar, Reyat told the Mounties, was interested in sending some type of powerful explosive device to India for use by the extremists in their fight for Khalistan. Parmar had mentioned the possibility of blowing up a bridge, a building or a car in India and had asked the mechanic to construct a device that could be set off by remote control.

Reyat said that he took a piece of cardboard tubing similar to the inside of a roll of paper towels and packed it with gunpowder and a bullet primer.

To ignite the primitive device, he inserted the filament of a lightbulb into the gunpowder. He ran two wires from the base of the lightbulb to a twelve-volt battery he had carried into the woods. When connected to the battery, the fila-ment became hot, and after a wait of twenty to thirty seconds, the cardboard tube exploded with a loud pop.

Parmar, he added, was disappointed. "I tried to make some-thing. I couldn't make it, okay," Reyat confessed. "I told him, 'Sorry, I can't help you.' " It wasn't the confession the RCMP corporals wanted to hear. But the explanation about the bungled test did fit in with the results of the RCMP's search of the woods for evidence of an explosion except for one peculiar detail.

Searches had been conducted on three separate occasions. Each time, the officers combed the area where Reyat had put on the demonstration for Parmar but could find no sign of an ex-plosion. There were no craters in the ground, no scorched grass, trees or earth. A police dog trained to sniff explosives was taken to prowl through the woods, but even its sensitive nose was of no use.

Nothing was discovered until nine days after the Air-India/Narita bombings. On the final expedition, a Mountie sat down with his back against a tree to take a cigarette break. Drooping his head, he spotted a piece of cardboard on the ground at his very feet. It was a blasting shunt, a small, stiff piece of cardboard used to separate the wires on a blasting cap to prevent a premature detonation. The Mounties finally had a piece of evidence, albeit a slim one. Reyat, however, denied using anything as sophisticated as a blasting cap during his experi-ment.

Soon after the interrogation session, Reyat and Parmar were charged with two criminal offences: possession of explosives for an unlawful purpose and the manufacture of an explosive sub-stance with intent to endanger life or damage property. The charges stemmed from their activity in the woods and not, as many people assumed, from the Air-India or Narita bombings.

As far as these incidents were concerned, the RCMP did not have the evidence to charge anyone.

The prosecution could not make the accusations stick. The charges against Parmar were dropped. Reyat pleaded guilty to reduced charges the possession of an unregistered weapon and unlawful possession of an explosive substance. He was fined $2,000. Tape recordings by the RCMP of Parmar's telephone conversations later revealed that the fine was paid by the Babbar Khalsa.

Undeterred by this setback, the RCMP continued its pursuit of Reyat. Investigators were troubled by two incidents involving him that had not come up when he was interrogated in Novem-ber.

Investigators were aware that Reyat had been interested in a portable stereo commonly known as a "ghetto blaster." Larry Wheeler, who worked at Factory Sound in Victoria, B.C., said that Reyat came to the store on June 1, 1985, and showed an interest in the stereo's clock. He bought the stereo but later returned it, saying he was not happy with the clock's alarm, Wheeler told police.

In addition, Raymond Ridout, a clerk at the Auto Marine Electric Store in Burnaby - the Vancouver suburb where Par-mar lived - told police that Reyat purchased two twelve-volt batteries from his shop on June 22, 1985, the day the bombs were planted on the two CP Air flights from Vancouver.

Reyat abandoned Duncan in the summer of 1986 and moved to Coventry, England, where he found work in a Jaguar automobile factory. He was detained by the British constabulary on February 5, 1988, and informed that the RCMP was charging him with two counts of manslaughter for the deaths of the Narita baggage handlers and with a variety of explosives offences. The charges make no mention of Air-India.

At an extradition hearing, Magistrate William Robins initially expressed doubts about the strength of the prosecution's case but ultimately agreed in August 1988 to order Reyat's return to Canada to face the charges.

Reyat's appeal to the high court was rejected in January 1989.

It is a big step, however, from playing with cardboard tubes and gunpowder in the woods to making bombs that can kill two baggage handlers in Tokyo or blow an airliner out of the sky. Nevertheless, the RCMP is convinced, as Rockwell so forcefully stated during Reyat's initial interrogation, that the Duncan mechanic built a powerful bomb and packed it inside the Sanyo stereo tuner before handing it over to the Third Man.

Reyat told the RCMP that although the Third Man had stayed at his home for a week, he had learned little about him. He thought the man's name was Surjit Singh and that he was twen-ty-five years old, was once a teacher in India and had lived in Toronto for the previous few years. "I'm just guessing. I don't know," Reyat added.

Reyat's activities and his association with the Third Man can be interpreted in the same way as the telephone numbers left behind when the flight reservations were made with CP Air in Vancouver. Some investigators believe that the numbers were deliberately intended to lead the police off track. Similarly, Reyat may have been used as a cover to deflect attention away from the real terrorist bombers. With Reyat, the RCMP may have been following another path of deception laid out in front of them while the actual perpetrators of the horrendous crimes, in a separate but parallel operation, escaped unhindered.

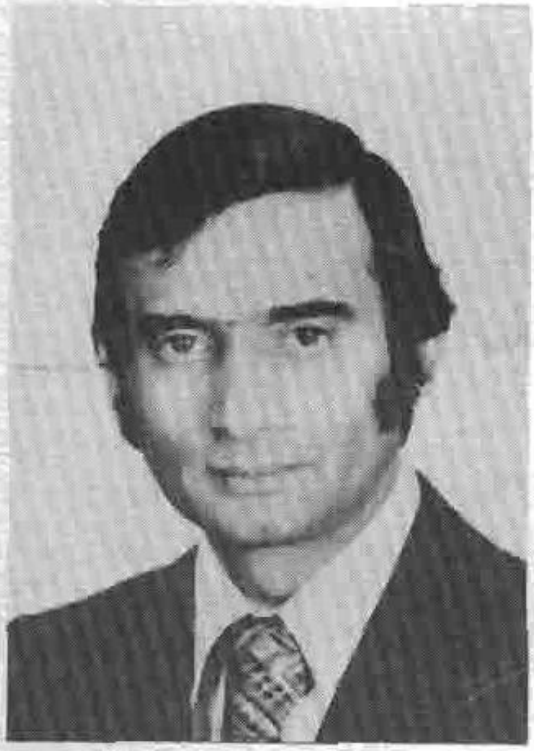
Reyat's unsatisfactory performance for the RCMP in Novem-ber 1985 may have been more a consequence of his ignorance than of attempts to be evasive. Frustrated in their interrogation, Henderson and Rockwell convinced Reyat to take a lie detector test, a plan overruled by Reyat's wife when she arrived at the RCMP office shortly after midnight.

"So you sort of decided then you don't want to tell me the whole truth," the frustrated Henderson commented while arrangements were still being made to fly Reyat by helicopter to Vancouver for the polygraph test.

"I told you what I know," Reyat replied. "I told the truth."

Kuldip Singh Samra, a suspect in the Osgoode Hall killings, raises his trousers at a Pape Avenue temple press conference to show injuries he claimed were inflicted by Metro Toronto Police officers in July 1980.

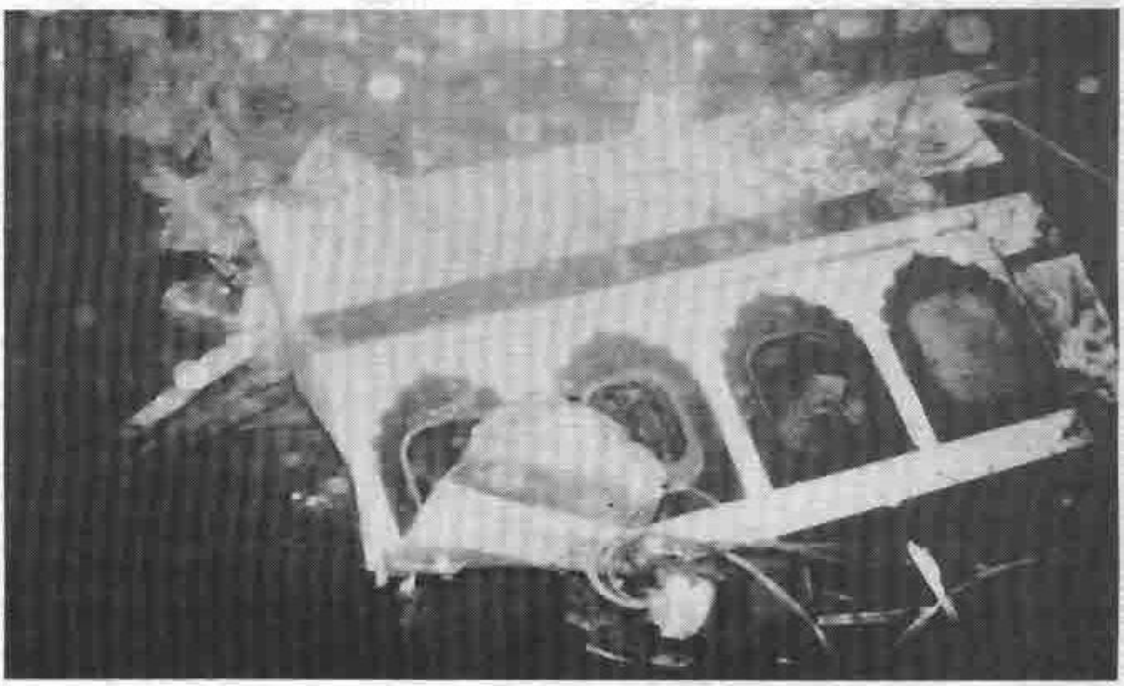
Amarjit Singh Tatla is wheeled out of the Ontario Supreme Court after being shot in a courtroom in March 1982.



Oscar Fonseca — one of the two victims of the Osgoode Hall killings.

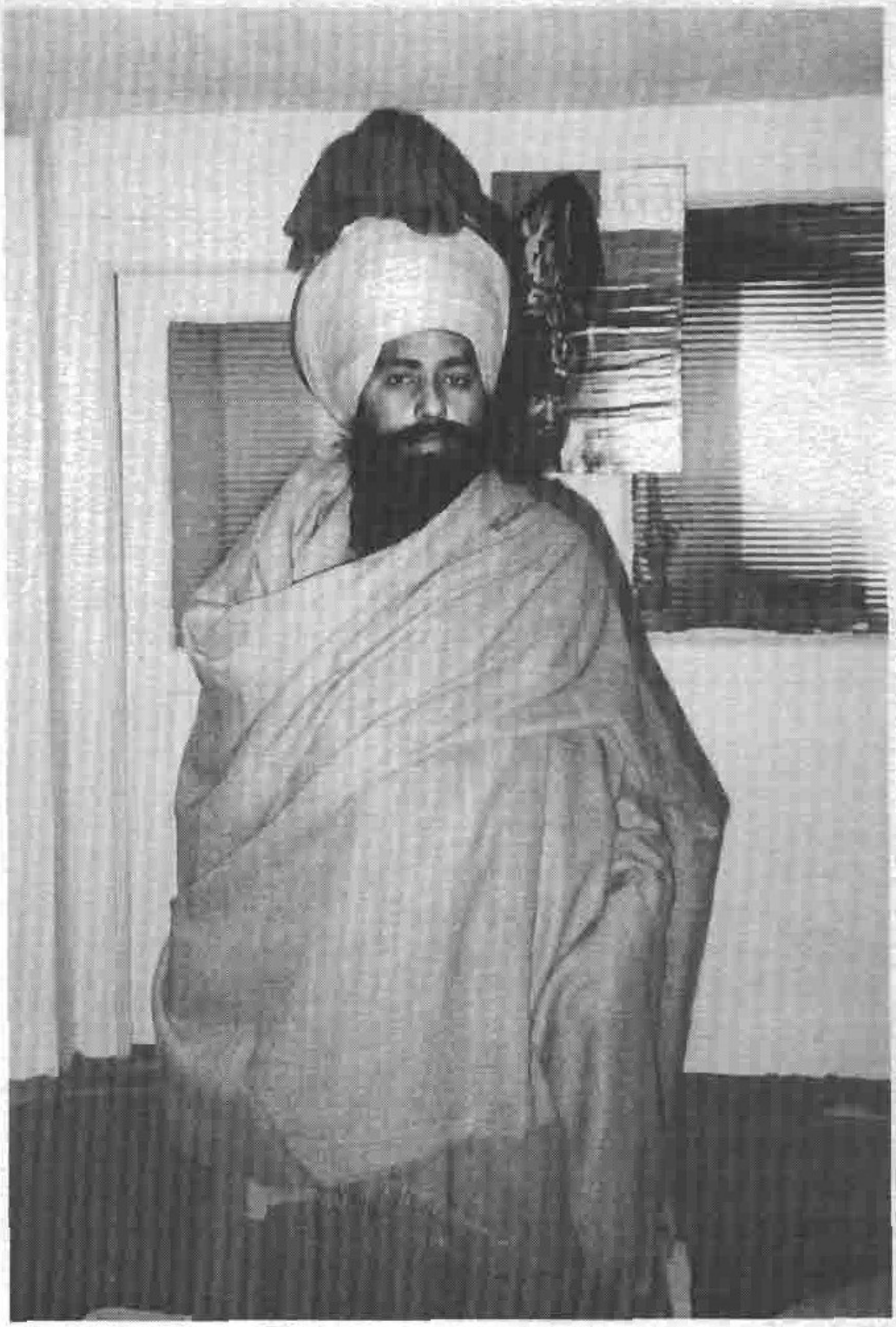
Constable Christopher Fernandes with a medal and citation honouring his bravery in tackling the gunman at the downtown Toronto demonstration in November 1982.

Two unidentified Sikhs distribute donuts and ladoo, an Indian dessert, outside Toronto's Old Weston Road temple to celebrate the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on November 1, 1984.



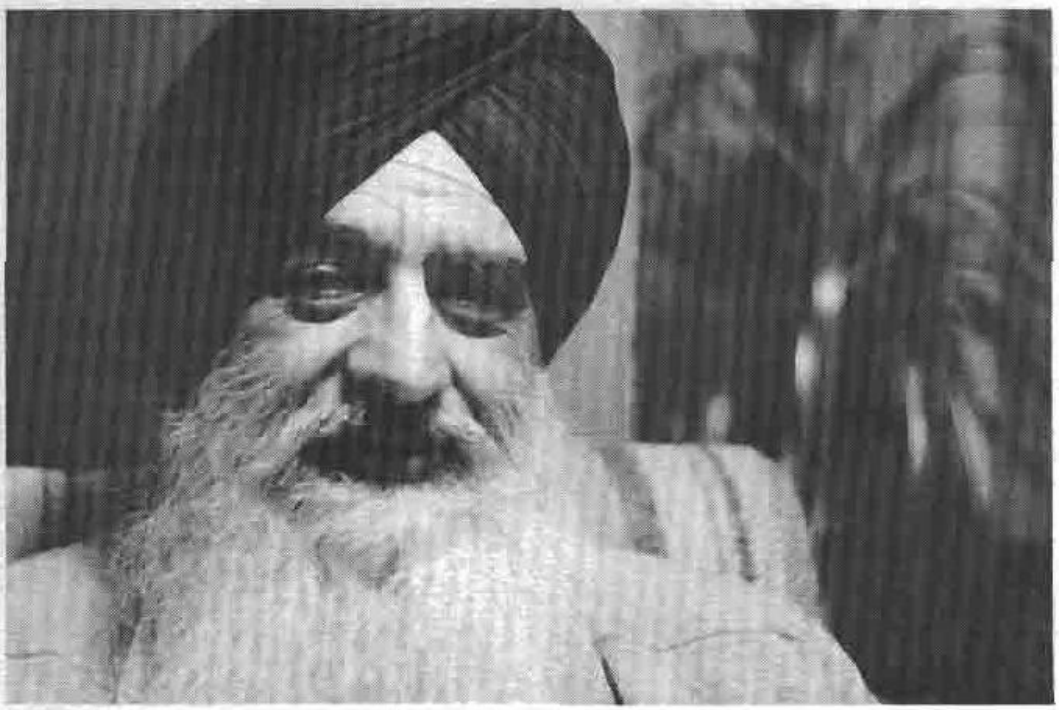
A fuselage portion from the Air-India Boeing 747 bombed on June 23, 1985 lies at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean off Ireland. Photo was taken by a Canadian Aviation Safety Board mini-submarine.

An Irish soldier at the Haulbowline Naval Base holds a violin case recovered from the Air-India bombing wreckage. The case belonged to an Ottawa girl killed in the crash.

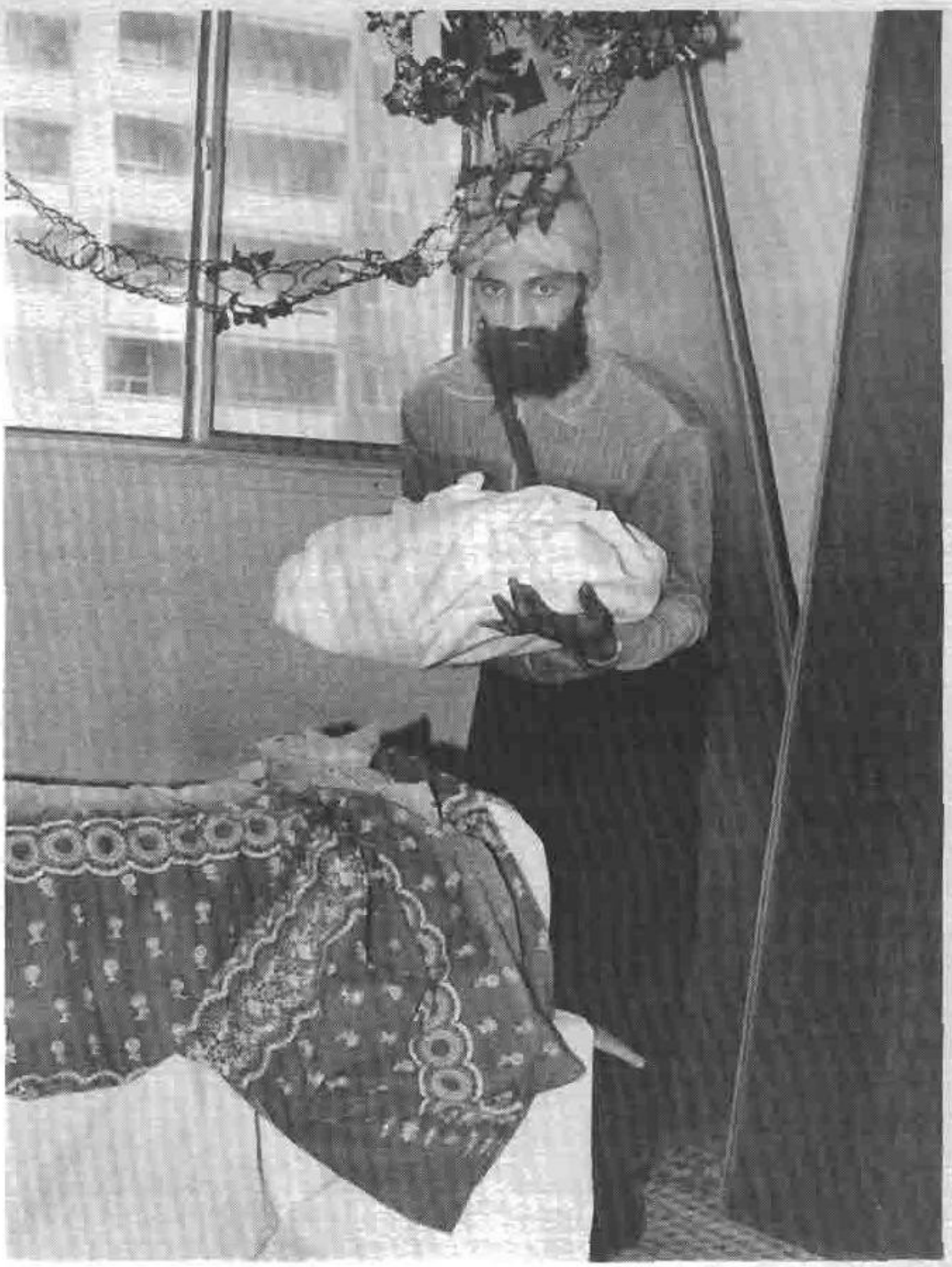


The Living Martyr, Talwinder Singh Parmar, poses for author Zuhair Kashmeri during a visit to the Hamilton Sikh Temple in September 1985.

Talwinder Parmar leaves the Hamilton courthouse with lawyer David Gibbons on April 14, 1986, after he and others from the Babbar Khalsa were acquitted of conspiracy to commit terrorism in India.



Jagjit Singh Chauhan, the self-styled president of the Republic of Khalistan, at a Mississauga, Ontario, home in December 1981, following an interview with author Zuhair Kashmeri.



Fauja Singh Bains, the gunman who shot Constable Chris Fernandes at a Toronto demonstration in 1982, holding the Guru Granth Sahib — the Sikh scripture — at his apartment in 1979, after an RCMP raid that had led to the desecration of his home chapel.

India Consul General Surinder Malik, one of several diplomats that Canada asked India to remove after CSIS unearthed evidence of the India spy network.

Vice-Consul Davinder Singh Ahluwalia. CSIS agents believe that he was the Indian spy who laid the groundwork for the destabilization game. He was transferred in 1985.

The flamboyant Vice-Consul Brij Mohan Lal, Ahluwalia's successor, poses at his farewell party. He was a key diplomat-spy whose transfer was demanded by Canada.

The postcard printed by Talwinder Singh Parmar and distributed to Sikhs in Canada, the United States, Britain and Punjab, India, in 1981 as part of his campaign of self-promotion.

7

The CSIS agents who began assembling in their Toronto and Vancouver regional offices immediately after the Air-India crash resembled battle-weary soldiers recovering from an unex-pected shelling. The majority, hurriedly ordered in to work that Sunday, June 23, 1985, were members of the counter-terrorism unit who only two weeks earlier had heaved sighs of relief when the Golden Temple anniversary had passed peacefully. That Sun-day is etched in the memory of agents Pat Olson and Fred Gib-son.

There was no pandemonium, no frenzied running around in the CSIS offices. There was tremendous pressure on the agents, but of a different kind than that triggered in other police or-ganizations by the mammoth tragedy. The questions on everybody's mind at the domestic spy agency that day and for days after were simply: Had CSIS bungled its assessment of the threat posed by the Sikhs? Had some crucial information been glossed over, ignored or missed completely?

CSIS launched an internal review of its operations. "The infor-mation is computerized," Olson said. "On that Sunday, people were brought in to begin a full review of any information to make sure we had not missed something that indicated that an Air-India jet would actually be bombed."

Understandably, CSIS was concerned about the Indian warn-ings passed along through External Affairs, notes that agents had come to believe were meant to simply "stir the pot." Should they have been taken more seriously, despite the high incidence of what Olson termed "phony or false requests that had no sub-stance"?

It appeared initially as if the keepers of Canada's national security were engaged in a massive game of covering their own backsides. As the review dragged on for one seemingly endless week, the meticulous internal examination turned up a clue that had gone unnoticed early on but, with the benefit of hindsight, gave the appearance of a glaring error.

An agent participating in the assessment of CSIS's West Coast operations was so puzzled by one report that he took a computer printout of it to the chief of counter-terrorism in the Toronto office. It was the report filed by Larry Lowe and Lynne Mc-Adams documenting their observations of Talwinder Singh Par-mar and Inderjit Singh Reyat in the Duncan woods in early June.

The agent dropped the printout on the chief's desk and pointed to Lowe's conclusion that the noise he heard in the woods sounded like a hunting rifle being fired. It didn't make sense, the Toronto agent said, for anyone, let alone Reyat and Parmar, to drive to a desolate wooded area, walk deep into the forest and fire a single rifle shot. That would only prove that the rifle worked. Even if the journey into the woods was for some-thing as innocent as target practice, there would have at least been more than one shot fired. They concluded the incident would have to be reinvestigated.

Within minutes, the Toronto office was on the line to Ottawa and British Columbia. A CSIS agent from Toronto flew to Van-couver to give the RCMP's newly formed Air-India task force a briefing on the finding and on the retrospective analysis.

After Larry Lowe had led investigators on two searches of the Duncan woods, a third and final search, which included an RCMP forensic team, was mounted on July 2. As already noted, finding the blasting shunts placed Parmar, Reyat and the uniden-tified Sikh at the top of the list of suspects. Surveillance on Par-mar and Reyat was intensified, with the Mounties now taking the lead. The RCMP obtained warrants for a criminal wiretap on the two men and all their known associates,

whose names and movements over the past year were supplied by CSIS.

This spirit of cooperation between CSIS and the RCMP was unusual, and it did not last. Always intensely distrustful of each other - the RCMP treated CSIS civilian agents with scorn, while CSIS viewed the Mounties as narrow-minded and ill-informed - the two agencies soon found themselves at loggerheads during the investigation. The rift between them has made it possible that the people responsible for the two bombings may never be brought to justice.

An RCMP task force was responsible for developing the case against Parmar and the Babbar Khalsa. The key points were Reyat's experiment in the woods, his quest to obtain dynamite and his purchase of the stereo tuner used in the Narita blast. Yet, while the task force gathered considerable circumstantial evidence, it could not put together a strong enough case to take to court.

The RCMP was under intense political pressure to solve the case. The pressure to lay charges stretched all the way to New Delhi. The string of "cry wolf" notes and memos that had preceded the bombings were replaced by constant inquiries on the progress of the investigation. New Delhi demanded to be kept up-to-date on every development. External Affairs turned to the federal solicitor general for answers, while the solicitor general looked to the RCMP commissioner.

Pat Olson and Fred Gibson and several Mounties remember the pressure applied by the solicitor general's office through RCMP commissioner Robert Simmonds. Invariably every new memo brought with it a push for quick arrests. The Mounties were told that India was kicking up a fuss with External Affairs, claiming in its diplomatic notes that Canada was not doing its share in bringing Sikh terrorists to justice. Eventually, it was this pressure that caused RCMP heads to order investigators to obtain search warrants and go on what most people in the task force called "a fishing expedition."

The task force caved in to the pressures in November 1985 and charged Parmar and Reyat with the explosives offenses. As television screens across Canada and abroad showed pictures of the two Babbars walking through snow flurries into the Duncan courthouse, viewers were left with the impression that the Air-India case had been solved. But it had not a fact the British Columbia prosecutor was forced to admit in court. He declared that the charges had nothing to do with Air-India or Narita, although they had arisen from that investigation.

The Mounties had lived up to their motto of always getting their man - but for what purpose? The arrests deflected some of the heat away from the task force and allowed it

to continue with its investigation, which continues to this day at a cost well in excess of $60 million and mounting.

Key CSIS agents involved in the investigation were opposed to the arrests. They felt that the action was premature and could jeopardize the eventual success of the case. CSIS believed that the plot went far deeper. Moving more slowly than the RCMP, CSIS agents were uncomfortable with what appeared to be the task force's focus on the obvious. While the RCMP investigation was running into dead ends, CSIS analysts began piecing together other bits of information that had either been ignored or rejected by the Mounties. The findings in their parallel investigation were startling.

The CSIS investigators slowly became convinced that the In-dian intelligence service may have played a role in the bombings. And the further they probed, the more their suspicions grew.

The case against the Indian intelligence service was cir-cumstantial. But it was enough for high-level CSIS officials from Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal to stake their reputations and their jobs on convincing CSIS director Ted Finn to stand firm against the pressure for quick solutions exerted by External Affairs and the solicitor general's office.

By forcing the issue, CSIS pushed Indo-Canadian relations to their lowest level ever.

At about the time the RCMP was making its November arrests, two senior CSIS officials in B.C. described at a CSIS meeting their version of a criminal flow chart on Sikh violence in Canada. At the very top they placed the GOI (the government of India), and in brackets beside it, the Secret Service Bureau, CBI-RAW, Third Agency. Below GOI were the names of Indian agents of influence and agents provocateurs. Below these were the supporters of the Babbar Khalsa, many of them suspects in the two bombings. CSIS agents believed that the RCMP task force was setting its sights too low in the investigation.

So convinced had CSIS become of the GOI connection that, at one Air-India task force meeting, a CSIS agent had seriously suggested that "if you really want to clear the incidents quickly, take vans down to the Indian High Commission and the consu-lates in

Toronto and Vancouver, load up everybody and take them down for questioning. We know it and they know it that they are involved."

CSIS's theory of a GOI connection had the support of at least one senior member of the RCMP task force in Vancouver. This individual was pushing internally for a greater emphasis on examining the Indian government's role in the bombing. He was rebuffed and the task force went ahead with its ill-fated Novem-ber arrests of Parmar and Reyat.

Meanwhile, CSIS agents continued accumulating fragments of information in support of its contention that the Indian govern-ment was involved in the Air-India and Narita bombings. One of CSIS's first clues came in a very public form - the news media which, said Pat Olson, "blew our minds."

One day after the crash, the Globe and Mail, directly beneath a front-page piece on the Air-India and Narita bombings, ran a story headlined "Police seeking two fugitives for bombs on jets." The source of the story was identified only as an official of the Indian government.

That official, it was later learned, was Surinder Malik, the Indian consul general in Toronto. Malik said that Lal Singh and Ammand Singh, the two fugitives sought by the FBI in a plot to assassinate Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi during his 1985 visit to the United States, were behind the bomb-ing, and that a check of the CP Air computer would confirm the presence of L. Singh on the passenger list.

A CSIS analysis of news stories on the case raised questions about the Globe and Mail article. The information in it came within sixteen hours of the crash, when the police had only just finished retrieving the CP Air passenger list stored in the airline's com-puter. How could Malik have had access to it and known about the L. Singh listing? And even if he had obtained it through Air-India's own computer the airline computers are linked -why zero in on L. Singh when there were dozens of other Singhs on the list?

Curiously, Malik knew more details about the two blasts than did the police investigators. In the Globe article, he claimed that his source was the Indian intelligence

network, which had traced the methods of planting the bombs and the identity of the culprits within hours. Malik said that while one of the suspects was booked to Japan, the other was booked to Toronto and onwards to Bombay. He also said that the two checked their bomb-laden bags but did not board the flights themselves. In sum, Malik had painted a scenario of the double-sabotage opera-tion that was a near perfect account of what the Mounties would take weeks to fathom.

Malik continually fed the Globe information pointing to Sikh terrorists as the source of the bombs. He was behind another story six days after the crash, this one headlined "Air-India pilot reported given parcel by Sikh." Although he went unnamed in the story, the Sikh was Jagdev Nijjar, publisher of Ittihas, a Pun-jabi weekly newspaper based in Toronto. The implication left by the story was that a bomb had been passed along in the form of a wrapped parcel and unwittingly carried into the cockpit of the airplane.

According to Malik, Nijjar was a separatist; Nijjar's brother, Balbir Singh Nijjar, was in the inner circle of Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan's government-in-exile; and the co-pilot was a "rabid separatist" the implication being that he would be amenable to undertaking a suicidal mission.

The RCMP checked into the claims made in the story but discovered it was another of the many pieces of irrelevant infor-mation that littered the path of the Air-India investigation.Nijjar and the co-pilot of the doomed aircraft, S.S. Binder, had indeed dined together the night before the flight at Toronto's Royal York Hotel, where the Air-India crew were staying. The two men knew each other through a mutual friend in India, but no pack-age changed hands. The recovery of the airplane's flight re-corder, the "black box," made it clear that there had been no explosion in the cockpit.

The disinformation spread by Surinder Malik was not the only concern CSIS agents had with the Indian diplomats. There was also a peculiar string of passenger cancellations in the days preceding flight 182. In the eyes of CSIS intelligence analysts, the change in travel plans by people associated with the Indian government was suspicious.

Foremost was Malik, who cancelled seats for his wife and daughter on flight 182. He claimed later that his daughter unex-pectedly had to write some school examinations and so the trip to India was delayed.

Another change of heart came from an Indian bureaucrat who had been part of the Rajiv Gandhi entourage to the United States. Siddhartha Singh was head of North American affairs for exter-nal relations in New Delhi. He had taken a side trip to Canada to meet with foreign affairs counterparts in the federal govern-ment in Ottawa. He visited with Malik one week before the crash. He was booked to return to India aboard the doomed flight 182 but changed his travel plans at the last minute. Instead, he went to Brussels on other government business.

Other cancellations on flight 182 included the owner of a Toronto car dealership who was a friend of Malik's.

In addition, an RCMP corporal confirmed, a sister-in-law of the head of the Dal Khalsa in Windsor, Ontario, cancelled her ticket on the flight. The Dal Khalsa was an offshoot political party established in Punjab to compete with the Akali Dal, the predominant political party in the state. The driving force behind the Dal Khalsa was Zail Singh, the president of India under Indira Gandhi. The party had originally been established to bring Gandhi's supporters in Punjab back into power, but it later be-came a strong advocate of an independent Khalistan. At the time of Operation Bluestar, all allegiances had long since vanished. Support for the Dal Khalsa party had spread overseas, resulting in the creation of a Canadian wing with its leadership centred in Windsor.

Babbar Khalsa high priest Talwinder Singh Parmar had travelled to Windsor within weeks of the crash of flight 182 to meet with local Sikhs at their temple, an innocuous square build-ing built from concrete blocks. The August 3 meeting had been arranged by the head of the Dal Khalsa in Windsor. Soon after the meeting, Surinder Malik attempted to plant a story with the Globe about the event. The twisted set of facts supplied by Malik set off a chain reaction that resulted in CSIS breaking all ties with representatives of the Indian government in Canada.

Malik set up his description of the Windsor gathering by giving out details of an earlier meeting in Mississauga. He claimed that two Toronto Sikh separatists, one of whom would accompany Parmar to Windsor, had a secret meeting on July 3 with a group of Islamic fundamentalists in Mississauga. The purpose of the meeting, Malik said, was to gain support from fundamentalists in Pakistan and Afghanistan for the separatist fight in Punjab. (The Indian government has suspected that the Sikhs fighting in Punjab purchased arms through Afghan rebel groups with the assistance of Islamic fundamentalists in Pakis-tan.) The story was erroneous. Malik had obtained the informa-tion on the Mississauga meeting from an article published by LaRouche's Executive Intelligence Review.

On the subject of the Windsor meeting, Malik spoke with greater authority. In the Windsor temple, Malik said, Parmar declared that a five-man assassination team had been dispatched to India to kill Rajiv Gandhi. The hit was to take place on August 15, the anniversary of India's independence, while the prime minister gave a traditional address to a gathering at the historic Red Fort, the seat of the old Mogul Empire in India where every prime minister has made an Independence Day speech to the nation.

Malik pressured the Globe to publish this story, adding that it could be used to make a stronger case for blaming the Air-India and Narita bombings on the Babbar Khalsa leader. Malik also decried the Canadian system of justice for failing to come up with a quick solution to the bombings. "In India we would have had a confession by now. You people have too many civil-rights and human-rights laws," he complained.

The Globe asked Pat Olson what he knew of the Windsor meeting. As it happened, he knew a lot, since CSIS had Parmar under tight physical and electronic surveillance after the bomb-ings. Through either an informant or, more likely, an electronic bug planted inside the Windsor temple, CSIS had been privy to Parmar's talk of an assassination squad. But, whereas Malik had described the assassination plot as if it had been planned in great detail, CSIS gave it a different interpretation. The agency saw it as a case of Parmar spouting off to raise funds for the Babbar Khalsa. The Globe decided against publishing Malik's story.

CSIS had read Parmar correctly. He left Windsor with plenty of donations from the faithful, but nobody, especially not a hit team of Canadian Sikhs, tried to take out the prime minister of India on August 15.

CSIS was curious about the Globe's source of information on the Windsor meeting. Without identifying Malik, who was a confidential source at the time, the newspaper told CSIS that the information came from within the Indian consulate.

Olson recalled that CSIS officials were infuriated by the Indian consulate's attempt to distort and spread publicly the details of the Windsor affair. New Delhi had been given the information confidentially by the Canadian government and that confidence had been betrayed.

At this point, CSIS decided that the service was not going to sit back and let its information be twisted by the Indians. To avoid what Olson described as the "circuitous route" of provid-ing the Indians with classified information that they could then use for disinformation purposes, CSIS put an abrupt end to shar-ing its top-secret reports with External Affairs. The agency would continue to inform India, through External, of anything it un-covered that threatened the national security of India or any of its citizens, but the updates on the status of the Air-India inves-tigation and of the overall surveillance of Canadian Sikh separatists came to a halt.

The RCMP had no such qualms and continued sharing infor-mation, including what it had gleaned from CSIS files, with agents of India's Central Bureau of Investigation and RAW. As a result, CSIS found it more difficult than ever to work with the RCMP towards the common goal of solving the Air-India and Narita bombings.

In 1985 and 1986, regional CSIS offices in Toronto and Van-couver held back information on the case while Canada and India negotiated an intelligence-sharing agreement. CSIS was opposed to a formal agreement, especially since the Indians proposed stationing a RAW agent in CSIS offices. Three months after the crash, in addition to not sharing its top-secret reports with External, CSIS forbade its operatives to contact Indian agents. It had concluded that the Indian intelligence agents were more of a threat to Canadian security than a helping hand to Canada's domestic spy service.

"If I was having coffee in a room with a Mountie and a RAW agent walked in, I would get up and leave the room," said Gib-son. The RCMP found this posture ridiculous.

The disinformation game played by the Indian intelligence agents showed signs of being well entrenched, and CSIS wondered how far back it went. A team of CSIS counter-intel-ligence agents were assigned to dig into the CSIS files and into the records of police departments that had had dealings with East Indians and Sikhs at the onset of the separatist movement in the late 1970s.

The records showed that the extended hand of the Indian government had reached into Canada to manipulate the political struggles of the expatriate Sikh community. The puzzle began fitting together after the agents reviewed intelligence reports on incidents like the shooting of Metro Toronto Police constable Chris Fernandes in the 1982 demonstration.

The influence of the Indian government seemed to crop up prac-tically everywhere as CSIS agents investigated the Sikh separatists either as national security threats or as suspects in the Air-India and Narita bombings. A case in point was a bombing incident in India less than a year earlier that was remarkably similar to the Air-India catastrophe.

On August 2, 1984, at 9:50 p.m. Laila Singh, a manager at Meenambakkam International Airport in Madras, was told by an anonymous telephone caller that two suitcases lying in the cus-toms inspection area contained rock-blasting explosives and were set to blow up within an hour. Singh frantically tried to rouse the airport's deputy director of operations, as well as the local deputy police chief and police explosives experts, but the warning was treated as a hoax. The bombs went off at 10:52 p.m., killing twenty-nine people and injuring thirty-eight others. Local police linked the bombing to terrorists in Sri Lanka, where the minority Tamil population was fighting a civil war for inde-pendence against the majority Sinhalese.

The police investigation uncovered a plot by Tamil separatists to plant the two explosives-filled suitcases on board a flight from Madras to Colombo,

the capital of Sri Lanka. The luggage was tagged by an accomplice at Madras airport so that in Colombo the bags would be automatically loaded in the cargo hold of two Air Lanka planes bound for London and Paris. The bombs were timed to go off while the airplanes were still on the ground at Colombo airport.

The passenger who checked the luggage in Madras did not board the flight to Colombo and did not go through the routine customs and immigration checks before the flight departed. Cus-toms officers had singled out the two bags for examination, pos-sibly because they were unusually heavy. When they could not find the owner, they set the bags aside for later examination. It was later presumed that the person who planted the bombs learned that the suitcases had not made it aboard the Colombo flight and placed two frantic but futile calls to warn airport officials.

According to Gibson and Olson, CSIS found the similarities between the Madras plot and the bombings in Narita and aboard Air-India remarkable, especially regarding the intended times of detonation. Air-India flight 182 was not supposed to blow up in mid-air. The bomb was timed to explode on the ground at Heathrow International Airport during the London refuelling stop. Because of the lengthy delay in Toronto while workers wrangled with the problem of loading the disabled engine that was to be transported to India for repairs, the airplane was well behind schedule. It was one hour away from landing in London when the bomb exploded.

CSIS was astounded that such similar plans could be hatched in opposite parts of the world. It would not be so astounding, though, if the plans emanated from the same source namely, from within the Indian intelligence service.

The leading suspects in the Madras bombing were two Tamil separatist groups, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Tamil Eelam Army. Both groups, outlawed in Sri Lanka, were based in the southern Indian province of Tamil Nadu and trained at camps near Madras.

The two groups drew large support from the province's largely Tamil population and its government. It was no secret within Western intelligence circles that they were allowed to exist with the knowledge and connivance of the In-dian government and its intelligence agencies.

Details of the Tamil groups' connections to Indian intelligence were obtained by CSIS through its information-sharing agree-ment with the CIA and Britain's MI-5. Britain was well versed on the Tamils' connection with the Indian government. Former members of its elite SAS (Special Air Services) squad were con-tracted to Sri Lanka to help train local security forces fighting the Tamil guerrillas.

The Indian intelligence group linked to the Madras bombings was a shadowy outfit known as the Third Agency, CSIS learned.

The Indian government had created this top-secret organization in the early 1980s to encourage extremist activities by Sikh radi-cals in Punjab. The aim was to rally support for the government throughout the rest of the country. The countermeasures it in-flicted upon Punjab in reaction to Sikh violence made the govern-ment appear to be acting from strength and with leadership.

After studying reports about the Third Agency, CSIS analysts developed a theory that the organization, or one very much like it, had moved into Canada and may have been responsible for the Air-India and Narita bombings.

CSIS had enough circumstantial material to reach the con-clusion that agents of the government of India were linked to the Air-India and Narita bombings. On the question of how deep the involvement was, there were two divergent views. Gibson and his group took the position that an order to bomb the aircraft on the ground, causing minimal risk of damage to life and property, came directly from New Delhi, most likely from the Third Agen-cy. Olson and others believed that the Indian operation in Canada went beyond the mandate set out by the Indian govern-ment, that even though the operatives did receive instructions from New Delhi to neutralize the Sikh separatist movement,

the idea of planting the bombs was the operatives' alone. Both groups agreed, however, that when Air-India exploded in mid-air, evasive action was quickly taken to distance the Indians from the act and to deliberately mislead investigators. For instance, Malik's information identifying Lal Singh and Ammand Singh, the two fugitives being hunted by the FBI in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination plot, led investigators down a time-wasting and fruitless trail. Eventually the pair, hot properties at the time, were discounted as suspects.

The CSIS theory may seem far-fetched, but the record of the Indian government shows that it will use both legitimate and illegitimate means to strengthen its political hold on a country the Western media calls "the world's largest democracy." The disinformation campaign made the public look upon the Sikhs as a menace and the separatist groups as the obvious culprits responsible for the bombings. And first impressions are hard to change. On all counts, the Indian disinformation operation was a success.

Perhaps no other Sikh in Canada caught the imagination of the media more than Talwinder Singh Parmar, the high priest of the Babbar Khalsa sect. After the Air-India bombing, he became well known as the prime suspect. The fanatical and charismatic leader of a cult, he came to symbolize in the minds of non-Sikhs all that is evil.

The media in Vancouver privately nicknamed him "Sidewinder" Singh Parmar, after the infamous air-to-air U.S. missile. The RCMP task force on Air-India began referring to him as "the Big T," no doubt for his towering stature, increased even more by the enormous blue or saffron turbans he wore. He referred to himself as "Zinda Shaheed" (the living martyr), a title originally bestowed on him by his onetime follower in Vancouver, Surjan Singh Gill. Some disillusioned Sikhs later changed this to "Murda Shaheed" (the dead martyr).

Parmar was born on February 26, 1944, to a farm family in Punjab, one of four brothers from his father's second wife. Par-mar explained in his fractured English: "I have two moms.... My father, you see, now eighty-seven years old, he got no sons from the first marriage so he got second mom. In our religion, law says no divorce. But if there is a big problem, and wife agrees to second wife, it is okay. If you throw one on the road, that is wrong." The first wife gave birth to six children. The problem, in the elder Parmar's eyes, was that they were all daughters.

Parmar came from the hardy, peasant class known as the Jat Sikhs. He attended the local village school, spending his boyhood days playing kabaddi, the Indian version of rugby but without the ball, and dropped out of school after grade ten to help on his father's farm.

Life on the farm was tough and soon gave the young Parmar a wiry and agile physique, which he would retain well into his forties. By the age of twenty-one, he was ready to be married off. His father chose a farm girl after turning down a teacher, with a warning to his son: "Never marry a woman who is more educated than you."

Parmar came to Canada on May 29, 1970, bringing with him his wife, Surinder Kaur, and their three-year-old daughter. In an interview, he said, "I came here for the same

reason you did. To get a job. For economic reasons. My brother was here, my sister was here, they called me over, so I came." The plough was replaced by a lathe in the lumber mill, the most common form of work for Sikhs arriving on the West Coast since the turn of the century. He began work as a machinist at L & K Lumber in British Columbia while his wife worked at a fish-packing plant. In those days, by his own account, he was not a devout Sikh. By some accounts, he did not wear a turban or keep his hair and beard unshorn. He and his wife moved into a basement apart-ment in Vancouver and were soon lost in the immigrant race to partake of Canada's wealth.

Parmar jumped headlong into the booming Vancouver real estate market. By 1979 he had bought a house and then sold it for some $260,000, making a whopping profit. In later years, his custom-built $350,000 home in Burnaby and his expensive taste in cars would fuel a controversy about the source of his wealth.

Parmar ascribed his opulence to his real estate acumen. "I bought many houses. I lived [in them for] two years and sold them. God never opens up the roof and puts down the money, he gives you good brain, he gives you good thinking and he gives you help."

As the real estate fever took over Parmar, there was another fever rising in him the Sikh faith. Politics and faith go hand in hand in Sikhism, and Parmar, as he put it, felt the urge to repulse the so-called Hindu aggression against the Sikhs in Punjab. In 1978 he was rebaptized into the five-hundred-year-old faith and began raising money from the congregations of British Columbia for the Sikh struggle.

The farm boy from Punjab took on the title "Jathedar" (soldier-priest). He abandoned Western attire for a flowing blue robe tied in place with a saffron sash. His imposing blue turban towered aggressively, at least a foot higher than the normal Sikh turban. "To be afraid is as much of a sin as frightening somebody," he thundered at his audiences.

Parmar lived and preached a rigid and highly orthodox view of Sikhism. It strictly forbade the consumption of alcohol, tobacco or meat; men did not cut their hair or trim their beards. But he lived in a modern society based on the gospel of selling. He realized, as the ever-increasing number of Christian televan-gelists also did, that to

promote the cause he must first sell himself to the Sikh community. Parmar the jathedar and religious zealot sent out his own self-promoting flyer, a colour postcard of himself clutching a pair of swords and attired in all the regalia of the ancient warrior race. On the back, he reprinted an ominous tenet of the tenth and last Sikh guru, Gobind Singh: "All modes of redressing a wrong having failed, raising of sword is pious and just." Beneath his photograph on the postcard, Parmar entered the title "Jathedar Talvinder Singh Babar." From time to time, he would sacrifice his family name for the sake of self-promotion and adopt Babar (or Babbar). Literally translated, it means "lion - king of the forest."

His postcards were mailed to Punjab and handed out at temples in British Columbia and Ontario as an introduction to his fiery sermons. But eventually the applause began to die out. His rhetoric sounded hollow as the conflict between Sikhs and Hindus in India worsened. Eager to regain his popularity, Par-mar announced that he would lead the struggle first-hand, not from the safe haven of Canada, but in the heartland of the conflict Punjab. With the help of donations from his expatriate sup-porters, Parmar promised to lead a mission of revenge in Punjab against the Nirankaris, a renegade Sikh sect that had taken on the garb of Hinduism.

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The Nirankaris, heretics in the minds of traditional Sikhs, had shot dead twelve Sikhs during a mob con-frontation in 1978 in Amritsar. It was the massacre that had originally turned Parmar into a militant defender of Sikhism, recalled Ajaib Singh Bagri, one of his close associates.

He flew off on his holy mission to Punjab in 1980 and returned to Canada in November 1981, stamped as a fugitive and a mur-derer by the Indian government. The accusations only served to increase Canadian Sikhs' adulation of him, elevating him to the rank of hero.

Parmar's followers see him as a valiant freedom fighter, and as noted, he has described himself as a "living martyr." But what role did he really play in the Punjab conflict? Parmar refuses to discuss the time he spent in Punjab except to say that he preached from village to village, expounding on the virtues of orthodox Sikhism. Popular

literature about India documents those tur-bulent times, but, significantly, there is no mention of the jathedar from Canada.

Some militant leaders in Punjab characterized Parmar as a meddler. Surjan Singh Gill, Parmar's former right-hand man, advisor and confidant in British Columbia, recalled Parmar or-dering denials of stories seeping into Canada from Punjab. One of the accusations against him came from Bibi Amarjit Kaur, the wife of a militant leader slain in the Nirankari confrontation. She accused Parmar of attempting to destroy her husband's move-ment, which she intended to lead after his death.

Although Gill went along with Parmar's commands, he now believes that there was substance to Kaur's allegations. Parmar had told Gill how he took control of the group after Kaur's husband died, and changed the name from Akhand Kirtni Jatha (United Religious Fighting Force) to the Babbar Khalsa. The name "Babbar Khalsa" was composed of two of Parmar's favourite words and meant "lions of the true faith." It was one of many splinter groups forming at the time in Punjab,

but its roar would be heard much louder in Canada than it ever was in India.

Parmar was accused of murdering two policemen in Punjab on November 19, 1981, during a police raid on a home where a group of militants were believed to be spending the night. The evidence against Parmar was weak. The killings, according to an Indian police affidavit, occurred in the village of Daheru at the home of a Niranjan Singh. In a shootout, Inspector Pritam Singh and Constable Surat Singh were killed. The Punjab police report stated that the pair "were murdered by a group of persons which included Talwinder Singh Parmar." Joginder Singh Khaira, the Punjab chief of detectives, swore out a statement that he recog-nized Parmar. Parmar, however, may not have even been in India - let alone in a remote Punjab village - at the time of the police slayings. He maintained to authorities that he was in Nepal when the police officers were killed. Other evidence would later support his claim.

But his innocence - if in fact he was innocent did not stop him from using the episode to promote himself at home in Canada. He bragged among small groups of followers of his

daring escape from the raid and from the clutches of the "evil Hindu empire." The Indians, for their part, also exploited the incident to the fullest, demanding that the Canadian government crack down on the Sikh separatist supporters.

Parmar's return to Canada in November 1981 came just before another visit to the country by Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan, the "president-in-exile" of Khalistan. Parmar's tales of valour, danger and intrigue caught the fancy of the Sikhs much more than Chauhan's political philosophy and reasoned argument. The Babbar Khalsa of Canada began receiving some of the funds that Chauhan's group had hoped to collect from the Sikh con-gregations in Canada.

While Chauhan would eventually retire in 1987 as president-in-exile, the Babbar Khalsa would make its way into an Indian government white paper on terrorism as the Canada-based Sikh terrorist network bent on destroying India.

The group was also given prominence in the terrorism files of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service as Canada's single biggest national security threat.

Within a year of his return from India, Parmar, now well estab-lished as the jathedar, or soldier-priest, of the Babbar Khalsa, bought land in the Vancouver suburb of Burnaby for about $78,000. Here he built a large home that featured eight bedrooms, three fireplaces and a four-car garage. He later added a Jacuzzi whirlpool bath. In an interview, he said that the key to his success was working a cash deal and not taking out a mortgage.

Parmar travelled constantly across Canada, setting up chap-ters of the Babbar Khalsa and raising funds for the group's ac-tivities. He flew abroad despite knowing that India had registered a warrant for his arrest on murder charges with Inter-pol, the international police information network. After his second trip to England, Parmar travelled through Holland and was arrested at the border of West Germany in June 1983. Facing an extradition hearing requested by the Indian government, he spent fifty-three weeks in

Ulna Hoe Prison in Dusseldorf before a West German judge decided that there was insufficient evidence against him.

A key piece of evidence for his defence was presented to the court by his barrister from England, Harjit Singh. It was a docu-ment from Nepal showing that Parmar had entered that country on November 15, 1981, and had departed for Canada on Novem-ber 22. According to the Punjab police records, the murders took place during the shootout of November 19.

Indian authorities presented the court with a statement from a Surjit Singh stating that he was at the house with Parmar when the shooting took place. Surjit Singh, however, later recanted that claim. Parmar's defence counsel produced an affidavit from Surjit Singh which said that he was under arrest on other charges at the time of the shootout and was taken to the house by police to assist in identifying its occupants.

He made the statement in-criminating Parmar before being acquitted on the original char-ges. Parmar was freed in July 1984 and he returned to Canada the same day.

Meanwhile, his followers in Canada, especially Surjan Singh Gill and Ajaib Singh Bagri, had made much of their leader's imprisonment. When Parmar arrived at Pearson International Airport in Toronto, he was received by a gauntlet of Sikhs dressed in seventeenth-century battledress and holding their ceremonial swords aloft.

Parmar's campaign had its setbacks. In the month after the Golden Temple assault and just after Parmar's release from jail in West Germany, the World Sikh Organization was being formed and plans were under way for its first grand convention in New York City. Parmar let it be known that he would be the keynote speaker at the Madison Square Garden gathering. But, as already recounted, CSIS forewarned U.S. authorities and Par-mar was refused entry to the United States.

Several months later, he preached at the Old Weston Road temple, his preferred haunt in Toronto. Speaking about both the Babbar Khalsa and himself, he touted one of his favourite lines: If Sikhs don't recognize a leader when they see one, how stupid can they

be? Some hot-headed Sikhs in the congregation took offence at his arrogance. Several kirpans, the ceremonial daggers, flashed in the audience. Parmar was challenged to a fight to prove his leadership, but he quietly slipped out a side door of the temple and fled, leaving behind his shoes at the front door (the Sikh religion demands that people leave their shoes outside the temple before entering).

Montreal was another stop on the Parmar preaching circuit. It was at a prayer meeting there, CSIS agents learned, that Parmar, not long after his return from West Germany, had actually boasted of committing the two murders in India.

About three hundred Sikhs had gathered at the Lachine Gurdwara in Montreal to welcome and pay homage to the man who had been jailed for their cause. Parmar explained how he had, in fact, killed the two policemen in Daheru, Punjab, and described a miraculous es-cape. He was saved from the clutches the the Hindu Raj, he told the rapt audience, by none other than God.

He was fleeing from the shootout, with the police in hot pur-suit, he said, and police helicopters hovering in the air on the lookout for him, when his escape was blocked by a passing train. As a rule, trains never stop in Daheru because the village was situated along a freight line. But, for some strange and mystical reason, the train suddenly halted. He climbed aboard, to disap-pear into the wilderness. God had performed an act of magic, the Living Martyr announced.

That was only one version of the escape story. He told a dif-ferent account to at least two other followers, Surjan Singh Gill in Vancouver and Tejinder Singh Kaloe, a lieutenant of the Bab-bar Khalsa in Hamilton, Ontario. They said in interviews that Parmar claimed his escape was made with the help of Zail Singh, then Indira Gandhi's home minister and later president of India. It was also Zail Singh who had assisted twice in the release of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale from Indian jails.

Where did the truth lie in the Punjab murder story? Publicly, Parmar proclaimed his innocence, insisting that he was in Nepal when the shootings occurred. Within the secretive confines of the Gurdwaras, however, he felt free to enhance his reputation as a rebel by bragging about the killings. Only the Living Martyr knows the truth of the tale.

Whatever the case, his electrifying storytelling ensured that he could rally supporters for the Babbar Khalsa wherever he travelled. These new adherents signed up with the sect and were baptized into the faith by Parmar - a ritual in which five devout Sikhs recited prayers and used the khanda, a double-edged sword, to stir a mixture of water and sugar that was offered to the reborn Sikh to drink. But the baptism brought with it more than a commitment to the faith. There were other obligations specifically, a membership fee of about $500 a month plus other donations from time to time.

Parmar's inflated ego and grandiose style wore thin with some Babbar Khalsa supporters. They grew tired of the constant solicitations for money and the unquestioning devotion Parmar demanded of his followers. There was evidence of a cultish mind-control strategy at work to subjugate the faithful. Fol-lowers would receive late-night telephone calls from leading Babbars announcing that they were bringing a group of members to the individual's house immediately for a prayer ceremony, called the simraan, to invoke the name of God. Other invocations involved the sudden call for donations as much as $5,000 within a day. Get a loan, whatever, but get the money immedi-ately, followers were ordered.

Darshan Singh Ghenkes, a Montreal life insurance agent, and his wife were baptized by Parmar in April 1986 but refused to participate in the late-night prayer services. Ghenkes recalled receiving telephone calls at 2 a.m., and despite his protests, a crowd of Babbar Khalsa members, including their children, would shortly arrive on his doorstep demanding to be let inside. He resisted the even more stringent commands for money. But what upset him most of all was the dictum to wear the flowing peasant robe and shirt - no trousers - and loafer-type shoes at all times. "Are you crazy?" Ghenkes remembered asking Parmar. "You want me to freeze my legs in that seventeenth-century battledress? You do it." Parmar publicly called him a renegade and that was the end of Ghenkes's relationship with the Babbar Khalsa. He would later become one of the heads of the Interna-tional Sikh Youth Federation.

In its pursuit of Parmar, CSIS was picking up other strange and conflicting intelligence reports on the man devoted to a separate Sikh nation. None were so strange as those

concerning the string of events that led CSIS to develop a theory about the identity of the mysterious Third Man,

the Sikh who received the stereo tuner from Inderjit Singh Reyat that ultimately blew up at Narita Air-port.

CSIS came to believe that the Third Man was someone quite different than the person Reyat had reluctantly and without cer-tainty identified for the RCMP during his interrogation a few months after the Air-India crash. The name CSIS came up with was Shera Singh, a thirty-five-year-old Sikh who in Samrala, Punjab, ran family businesses that included trucks, buses, brick making and a string of retail liquor stores. He was a supporter of India's Congress Party, a necessity if he wanted to maintain the government-issued licences required to run his businesses. Through his trucking business, he belonged to the Indian Nation-al Trade Union Congress (INTUC), one of the largest trade union bodies in India. INTUC is controlled by the Congress Party.

CSIS has not determined what links Shera Singh had with the planting of the Narita bomb - if, indeed, he was the Third Man - and will probably never find out conclusively. Shera Singh was shot and killed in a dispute with a rival wine merchant in Punjab in April 1986. Although police issued an arrest warrant for the killer, the investigation was quashed and the charge never laid, said the victim's brother, Gurbachan "Joe" Madpuri, a Mis-sissauga factory owner who also has strong ties to the Indian government.

Madpuri was the the president of the Overseas Congress Party, an association he started after moving to Canada. A Sikh himself, Madpuri does not dress according to the standards of the religion. His association was composed of about 350 mem-bers, mostly Sikhs, who had immigrated to Canada from India. It collapsed in 1984 following the invasion of the Golden Temple. "It exists only on paper now," he said, explaining that its mem-bers had grown frustrated with dealing with the Indian govern-ment. Before Operation Bluestar, the association served as a liaison with the Indian consulate in Toronto, helping its members with passport renewals and travel visas.

Indian missions abroad work at the same stifling pace as the bureaucracy on the subcontinent, he said.

Madpuri admits that he was questioned by the RCMP about his brother's travels to Canada but was never told the reason for the investigators' interest. Madpuri said that it was impossible for Shera Singh to have visited with Talwinder Singh Parmar in early June 1985 or to have travelled to Duncan, B.C., to stay for a week at the home of Inderjit Singh Reyat following the experi-ment with explosives in the woods outside Duncan. Shera Singh did not arrive for a visit in Canada until July 5, 1985, Madpuri insisted, adding that he had picked his brother up from Pearson Airport after his brother had travelled from India through New York City. Shera Singh returned to India in August 1985 after a six-week visit that included a one-week trip to Vancouver to visit relatives.

Curiously, Madpuri had been questioned by local police on July 6, 1985, the day after he says his brother arrived in Canada. They had a telex from the Vancouver police stating that Shera had threatened Madpuri's in-laws over a family feud. Madpuri said that he told police it was impossible for Shera to have been in Vancouver because he had only just come to Canada the pre-vious night at 11:30 p.m. from New York. When told that there could be a side to Shera that he did not know about, Madpuri replied, "Maybe... but that's his problem."

Madpuri doubts that his brother ever met Parmar, although Shera Singh once had contact with the Living Martyr's parents in Punjab. After Parmar was charged with the double police slayings in 1981, his elderly parents were arrested and jailed for no other purpose than to persuade Parmar to return to India and stand trial, Madpuri said. Shera Singh was asked to intervene by friends of the family because he knew a judge in the district where the Parmars were being detained. He was able to secure their release from custody, Madpuri said, shrugging his shoulders at the workings of the Indian justice system.

Madpuri acknowledged that Parmar would owe Shera a large favour for having his parents released.

Members of the Babbar Khalsa knew of Shera Singh as a man who was to carry money raised from Sikhs in Canada back to India, purportedly to assist the widows and children of men killed in the separatist struggle. The money may have been des-tined for more direct use in the fight for Khalistan.

Tejinder Singh Kaloe, the Babbar Khalsa lieutenant in Hamil-ton, said that Parmar was busily raising $40,000 for the cause in the early part of 1985. Kaloe was worried about getting money into the country, since earlier attempts through simple bank transfers had failed when the money inexplicably disappeared in India. Kaloe asked Parmar how the money would be delivered and was told that Shera Singh was coming to Canada in May and would act as a courier for the Babbar Khalsa. According to Kaloe, Shera Singh did arrive in Vancouver in May (weeks before his alleged arrival in July) to visit Parmar and later flew to Toronto before returning to India. The money he was supposed to carry never reached its intended destination, and Kaloe, among other Babbar Khalsa supporters, believed - without any proof - that Shera Singh kept it.

During the Air-India investigation, when the Babbar Khalsa's main players were under surveillance, the RCMP recorded a telling telephone conversation about Shera Singh between Kaloe and his brother-in-law, Rampal Singh Dhillon, on May 7, 1986. The pair were obliquely talking about a plan to send a group of Canadian Sikhs to Punjab to work out a deal with the state government to release some people from jail.

"Just don't bugger [it].... If you want to go with a system then go with a proper modus operandi, eh. [I] hope it's not going to be like Shera's plan, dear brother," Dhillon said, laughing into the telephone from his Brampton home.

"What's that?" a startled Kaloe asked.

"[I] hope it's not like Shera's plan, like before," Dhillon repeated.

"Shera has been killed, do you know?" Kaloe replied.

"Killed?"

"Yeah, this man turned out to be a dirty bastard...," Kaloe said.

"He was a dirty man and to me - to me he appeared to be a government [man]," Dhillon said. "Even this fellow, his brother, also appears to me the same."

The Babbars knew of Madpuri through this Overseas Con-gress Party and its cozy relationship with the Indian consulate. Parmar was aware of Madpuri as a potential donor and once summoned him to a meeting, where the factory owner flatly refused a demand for money. Madpuri recalled Parmar's re-quest, through a mutual associate, for a meeting with Davinder Singh Ahluwalia, the Indian vice-consul and intelligence agent in Toronto. The meeting took place in early 1985 at Madpuri's Mississauga home, but no one could figure out why Parmar would want to talk with a representative of the Indian govern-ment.

Parmar arrived for the meeting accompanied by Kaloe and he usual entourage of Babbars. He was introduced to Ahluwalia, who had served in Indian military intelligence and was con-sidered by CSIS to be the first and most disruptive Indian intel-ligence agent planted in Canada. Kaloe recalls Parmar saying that Ahluwalia, being a Sikh, was on their side and would help in their struggle against the Indian government from within its ranks. Both Kaloe and Madpuri confirmed that the pair went off by themselves in a room, closing the door behind them, and talked privately for more than an hour. Upon emerging from the room, Kaloe said, Parmar simply stated, "Everything has been taken care of." Neither Parmar nor Ahluwalia would reveal what it was they discussed, and the secret remains between them.

This was not the first time Ahluwalia had taken an interest in Parmar. After the high priest was arrested in West Germany in June 1983, Ahluwalia called up an old contact of his, Datinder Singh Sodhi, the photographer at the 1982 demonstration in which a Metro police officer was shot.

Sodhi recalled in an inter-view that Ahluwalia had a special offer for him.

"Davinder asked whether I would go to Germany and meet Parmar to find out, I guess, what he was doing and his connec-tions and his sources of money. When I declined, Davinder said, 'Why don't you go on a Friday and come back on Monday.' I asked him how I would get in to see Talwinder. He said, I'll arrange it so that you will be allowed in to see him and he'll meet you.' He offered me a free ticket, my stay there and he offered me $1,500." Sodhi, who had not forgotten how Ahluwalia had deceived him about the demonstration, turned him down.

However, according to Parmar's English lawyer, Harjit Singh, somebody with Indian connections did get in to see Parmar, and afterwards the defence team decided not to allow any visitors without prior screening.

Ahluwalia left Canada and the Indian diplomatic service later in 1985. Parmar denies ever meeting him.

By the time CSIS put all its information together, it found itself bogged down in a sea of overwhelming contradictions. And it had not come any closer to pinning down the individuals respon-sible for planting the two bombs aboard the airplanes. It knew that Parmar had called for bloodshed in Punjab but that he was cowardly enough to sneak away from his detractors through side doors. It knew that he publicly denied killing police officers in Punjab but that he privately took credit for the affair and revelled in the notoriety it brought him. Parmar spoke openly against the Indian government but met secretly with its representative. His close follower, Inderjit Singh Reyat, bought the stereo tuner that later blew up in the Tokyo airport, but the police could find no hard evidence that he actually built a bomb. The Third Man possibly Shera Singh, who had close political ties to the Indian government- also touched the stereo tuner but Shera Singh was dead and could provide no answers.

CSIS was left holding a handful of threads but without the means to tie them together to form a continuous string.

CSIS was working on the sound assumption that nothing which happened to the Sikhs in Canada could be separated from current events in India. But it was getting lost deeper and deeper in its maze of information. The RCMP, for its part, had little time for CSIS's head-spinning speculations. It was out to get its man - in this case, Talwinder Singh Parmar.

In May 1986 five Babbar Khalsa members in Montreal were charged with conspiracy to commit terrorism by plotting the bombing of an Air-India jet leaving from New York. When the charges were made known to Parmar by telephone, he exclaimed in a rage on the wiretapped call: "We told those bastards to stop it!" an indication that he had heard of the harebrained plot and had made an attempt to put an end to it.

The Montreal case was a strange one. It had originated with a Montreal crook code-named "Billy Joe." His criminal record in-cluded trafficking in narcotics, possession and use of a firean, kidnapping and assault. Billy Joe used to meet regularly with the rags-to-riches family of Darshan Anand, who ran an electronics store on Rue St. Laurent in downtown Montreal. Anand was close to the Babbars in Montreal but was neither a baptized Sikh nor a Babbar. He used to lend his Cadillac to Parmar during his Montreal visits, and he considered Parmar a loyal Sikh.

Billy Joe befriended Anand's son, Maninder, buying expensive goods from him and offering to sell him stolen cars, including a $50,000 Porsche sports car for $8,000. Through the twenty-one-year-old Maninder, he made contact with a few key Parmar associates who visited the store, and illegally sold an automatic rifle to one of them. He also began talking to them about the Sikh situation in Punjab. According to Billy Joe, they told him that they were planning to blow up an Air-India plane.

Billy Joe next approached the Quebec provincial police (QPF) - he had been an informant for them for twelve years - and said that in return for the waiving of a jail sentence against a friend, he would turn in the Babbars.

The QPF and the RCMP accepted the offer.

Billy Joe then convinced two Montreal Babbars, twenty-four-year-old Santokh Singh Khela and forty-two-year-old Kashmir Singh Dhillon, to meet with a man he described as a Mafia mem-ber from New York who would help them blow up a departing Air-India jet in return for several kilograms of heroin from India. The mafioso was actually Frank Miele, an FBI agent brought in to work the sting operation for the Mounties. Miele met the two and recorded discussions that showed he virtually had to squeeze from them the kind of statements that would be needed for a conviction.

With the spectre of the unsolved Air-India flight 182 bombing looming over the trial, the pair were convicted and sentenced to life in prison by Madame Justice Claire Barrette-Joncas. They will be eligible for parole after serving seven years. Both the verdict and sentence are under appeal.

Billy Joe was never identified and did not testify at the trial, thus robbing the defence of its ability to discredit the sting. The RCMP claimed that Billy Joe had disappeared, but the force did live up to its end of the bargain. The police intervened with the National Parole Board on behalf of Billy Joe's imprisoned friend. He served less than nine months of a ten-year term, and another serious charge against him never identified in court carried a maximum life sentence was dropped. that

Maninder Anand was also charged, along with the head Bab-bar in Montreal, Chhatar Singh Saini, and Gurcharan Singh Ban-wait. After they had spent a month in custody, it was found that wiretapped conversations had been mistakenly translated. Saini, for instance, once telephoned Maninder Anand, wanting to buy "a twelve-amp battery" to make a "lo." Lo means "light" in Punjabi. In the English translation of the conversation, the RCMP had him seeking twelve pounds of explosives for a bomb. The three Sikhs were released and the charges dropped.

Within two weeks of the Montreal arrests, the RCMP struck again, this time in Hamilton, charging Parmar, Tejinder Singh Kaloe, Rampal Singh Dhillon, Ajaib Singh Bagri and three others with conspiracy to commit a string of terrorist raids in India. The

charges reinforced the public's impression that Parmar and the Babbar Khalsa still tarnished by the explosives charges laid the previous year in Vancouver were a vicious band of ter-rorists intent on creating widescale havoc and carnage. Accord-ing to the RCMP, the accused intended to sabotage railway lines, bridges and an oil depot, explode bombs at an airport, at govern-ment buildings and inside the Indian Parliament in New Delhi, and kidnap the children of politicians.

The charges came after the RCMP had tape-recorded hundreds of hours of conversations, both over the telephone and inside electronically bugged vehicles, as part of the Air-India investigation into the Babbar Khalsa. And they came after three Babbar Khalsa members from Hamilton Kaloe, Surmukh Singh Lakhaian and Daljit Singh Deol - had travelled to England. The RCMP, alleging that the trio were on their way to carry out the terrorist acts in India, arranged for British authorities to deny them entry to the country and return them to Canada. Indeed, a pair of Mounties sat behind the men on the flight from Toronto to London and back again.

The Sikhs were defended by David Gibbons, a leading criminal lawyer in British Columbia who had represented the Babbar Khalsa at other trials, and Michael Code of Toronto, the country's leading expert on wiretap law and a partner in the firm of powerful civil-rights advocate Clayton Ruby. Ruby oc-casionally joined in the Hamilton courtroom defence.

When the preliminary hearing began, Gibbons announced that he would not request a media ban on the publication of evidence. Since preliminary hearings are used to determine if there is enough evidence to send an accused on to trial, the defence can demand a publication ban on the basis that the hearing is weighted in favour of the prosecution.

It was a clever ploy. Reporters who packed the court on the first day of the hearing eagerly awaited the gruesome details of the massive terrorist plot. They left disappointed.

Among all the hours of wiretapped conversations, the evidence amounted to a single conversation between two of the accused Kaloe and Sadhu Singh Thiara as they drove through the streets of downtown Toronto on May 15, 1986. They were on their way to a store Thiara was thinking of purchasing to start a fabric outlet. The details of the alleged plot came in between moments of prayer, discussions of real estate values, curses against Toronto's lousy drivers and the frequent use of a Punjabi obscenity which translates as "sisterfucker." The so-called conspiracy began with Thiara mentioning the use of dynamite and Kaloe responding with a comment about an Indian train known as the Frontier Mail.

"All those sisterfuckers travelling first-class are millionaires. A poor person can't even purchase a ticket," Kaloe grumbled.

"Tejinder Singh, these Mails etcetera won't do much good, I can tell you that. Death of people won't make any difference," Thiara replied, according to the awkwardly translated English transcript produced in court.

They spoke about killing "at least ten thousand people" by widening the railway tracks so passenger trains would run off the rails, and went on to describe sabotaging an oil depot and setting an entire town on fire. They discussed leaving a bomb inside a suitcase at an airport and planting other bombs in government buildings or beneath bridges.

Their most brutal scheme was to kidnap the child of a member of Parliament and force the politician to carry a bomb inside the legislature. "Once your job is done your kids will reach home. If the job is not done then pick up their dead bodies," Kaloe said in an imaginary conversation with the MP. "There are, sisterfuck-er, 533 [or] 34 people in the Parliament," he added.

Charges were dropped against Dhillon and Bagri after the preliminary hearing, but the others were sent on to trial.

However, the defendants were acquitted when Mr. Justice David Watt, an Ontario Supreme Court trial judge, refused to admit as evidence the 105 wiretapped converations running to more than four hundred pages of transcript because the prosecution would not give the defence full access to the information used by the RCMP to obtain warrants authorizing the wiretaps. An Ontario Supreme Court ruling days earlier won coincidentally by Michael Code - made it necessary for the prosecution to provide the defence with all the information used to obtain a warrant. The purpose of the higher court ruling was to allow the defence to determine the validity of all information used by police to obtain wiretap warrants. The Ontario attorney general's depart-ment is appealing the acquittal.

Talwinder Singh Parmar and his Hamilton lieutenant, Tejinder Singh Kaloe, endured ten months in jail before being set free on April 16, 1987. "Had this trial continued they would have been acquitted. It is unfortunate it could not continue but we are happy to take an acquittal any way we can get it," said a jubilant David Gibbons on the steps of the Hamilton courthouse.

Within a few months, however, Parmar's iron grip on the Babbar Khalsa began to disintegrate. Tejinder Singh Kaloe joined with Vancouver's Surjan Singh Gill to form a breakaway group known as the Babbar Khalsa Panthak. The Punjabi word panthak means "ordinary people."

There was a good reason for the split within the Babbar Khalsa and the formation of the Babbar Khalsa Panthak. The RCMP had developed a new tactic in trying to isolate Parmar within the Sikh community. Teams of Mounties began interviewing his sup-porters in Toronto, Hamilton and Vancouver following the ac-quittal in the terrorist conspiracy case. They told Parmar supporters, such as Amarjit Deol of Toronto, not to follow Par-mar. Although they had no use for CSIS's theories on this matter, the Mounties openly declared that Parmar was an agent of the government of India.

In an interview, Parmar vociferously objected to the police tactic and said that it was a futile attempt by India to destroy him through the RCMP. He had grown familiar, he said, with the allegations that he was an Indian agent with a mission to des-tabilize the Sikh separatist movement in Canada.

The five-person governing committee of the Babbar Khalsa Panthak started an unsuccessful move to force Parmar to give an accounting of all the money he had collected, and it sought RCMP help in the investigation. The committee also began questioning the source of Parmar's private income.

As the evidence accumulated, there seemed solid grounds for being suspicious of the Babbar Khalsa leader. Parmar had a weal-thy backer in the person of Ripuduman Singh Malik, a mil-lionaire businessman in Vancouver. CSIS agents, who never mastered the pronunciation of his full name, referred to him as "Rip-o-damian." Malik came to Canada in 1972 from Punjab, where he had managed his father's gas station and an auto-parts shop. In Canada he opened a wholesale women's fashion-wear importing firm known as Papillon Eastern Imports Ltd./Les Im-portations Hindouies Papillon Ltée.

Malik had always supported Parmar financially and morally and, in turn, the Babbar Khalsa. He contributed thousands of dollars for Parmar's legal defence when he was arrested in November 1985 in Duncan and again the following year in Hamilton. "Whenever Mr. Parmar is arrested, the media promotes him as a Sikh. So, no matter what, I have to support him because I am a Sikh. The media has done a good job to put us together ... I will support him always," Malik said.

When CSIS examined Malik's finances, however, it uncovered some curious information. On March 21, 1984, less than three months before the assault on the Golden Temple, Malik's com-pany received a $2-million loan from the State Bank of India (Canada) Ltd. Malik had signed a single-demand debenture with a bank owned by the government of India. At the time, he was among those who helped support Parmar's family and paid legal expenses for the high priest,

who was sitting in a West German jail awaiting his extradition hearing. It was unusual, to say the least, for the Indian government to cooperate financially with an individual who supported a man like Parmar while the same government was describing the high priest as a brutal Khalistani terrorist.

Malik put up the Papillon company and its property as col-lateral for the loan, according to the debenture records filed with the British Columbia consumer and corporate affairs ministry. The terms of the debenture also required Malik's company to maintain accounts and carry at least part of its banking business with the State Bank of India. "I still deal with the State Bank of India this has nothing to do with anything," Malik said in a January 1988 interview. "If I don't deal with the State Bank of India, I'll be dealing with the [Canadian Imperial] Bank of Com-merce and the Bank of Commerce doesn't help Sikhs. The State Bank of India doesn't help Sikhs [either]."

He said he began dealing with the State Bank when the Sikh-Indian conflict was not very tense an incorrect statement. In early 1984, when Malik's dealings with the bank began, the con-flict had reached its peak with killings and bombings and ran-dom arrests, all leading up to the assault on the Golden Temple by the Indian army. Malik also said it would cost him too much to change banks at this stage. At the same time, he conceded, he had been described by the Indian consulate in Vancouver as a "security threat" and was told that he would not be granted a visa to visit India. The Papillon company, to this day, maintains an office in New Delhi.

India was refusing him a visa on the grounds of security, yet its own bank, aware that a portion of Malik's earnings went to help the Babbar Khalsa and Parmar, maintained a $2-million line of credit for him. Malik, for his part, neglected to mention that in Canada the Babbar Khalsa was promoting a boycott of Air-India and the State Bank of India.

Malik was on friendly terms with the Indian consul general in Vancouver, Jagdish Sharma. "I am really not their enemy," Malik said about the government of India. He explained that after the invasion of the Golden Temple, he seethed with thoughts of

revenge for about a week. After that, he said, his objective was to uplift the image and spirit of the Sikhs rather than seek solace in castigating the Indian government.

In spite of the financial support he provided Parmar and the Babbar Khalsa, Malik would not express unequivocal support for the concept of Khalistan. "I believe in [the] progress of the Sikhs," he said. "I believe the president of America should be a Sikh and [Canadian Prime Minister Brian] Mulroney should be replaced by a Sikh. I don't believe in Khalistan alone."

Malik remains strongly devoted to the Sikh religion. He wor-ships at the large Ross Street Gurdwara in Vancouver every Sun-day, selling religious books and promoting Sikhism. He started the Khalsa private school for Sikh children. In November 1985 he and Parmar assembled fifty members and founded the Khalsa Credit Union, whose assets, according to Malik, had passed $3 million by January 1988. He recalled that when the application for the credit union was made with the British Columbia govern-ment, he was visited by two men - he believes they were either Mounties of CSIS agents who questioned him about whether he intended to use the credit union to support Khalistan. He said that he replied: "It's run by the standards of the British Columbia government.... You people are talking just like the Indian govern-ment is talking."

Parmar's real estate acumen can also be attributed, in part, to his friendship with Malik. By 1988 Parmar was developing a million-dollar mini-subdivision. His own opulent home in Bur-naby had been fully paid for and was up for sale, and the Parmar family moved into the largest house of a four-house subdivision in Vancouver known as Worthington Place. The three other houses were listed for sale at prices ranging from $259,000 to $339,000.

Parmar's brother defended the real estate dealings by arguing that Parmar would have more time to work for the Sikhs if he was financially comfortable.

To help with the Worthington Place development, Malik provided $190,000 through the Khalsa Credit Union in December 1987, using Parmar's Burnaby home as backing. The loan was paid off in six months. The Delta Credit Union also provided $530,000 for the

development. That loan was guaranteed by Malik, who said in an interview in January 1988, "Parmar is a very clever man. He will be successful in whatever he does."

Sitting in his own dining room shortly before the Malik inter-view, Parmar smiled when asked about his real estate holdings. As his wife, Surinder Kaur, placed a basin on the table and then poured warm water from a pitcher so he could perform his ablutions before supper, the Living Martyr praised God for giving him the brains to strike gold. Admitting that the police had persistently questioned him about the source of his wealth, he said he had bought and sold houses, even purchased property and built houses himself, to make money. He also said that in 1972-73 he had owned a larger nine-bedroom house, which he sold. This was two years after he came to Canada seeking work.

CSIS had no evidence to link Malik with the Air-India and Narita bombings, but Pat Olson and Fred Gibson confirmed that his dual allegiances helped the agency develop the theory that the Indian government had a hand in carrying out the double sabotage. In the fall of 1985, CSIS had viewed the Babbar Khalsa as the biggest security threat among Sikhs in Canada. Now it suddenly discovered that the Babbar Khalsa had links with the government of India. As a result, Olson said, CSIS agents were not surprised that Parmar's associates could visit India with ease despite his fiery views about Khalistan. Any other Sikh, he said, with the "slightest blemish" would be locked up as soon as he entered India.

CSIS, fully convinced that Parmar was an intelligence agent, attempted to enlist him as a double agent. Several CSIS agents, directly or through intermediaries, approached Parmar to see if he could be recruited.

The gambit did not work, said Olson with a wry laugh. "Lord knows we tried and tried, but he kept telling us we were full of it, he had nothing to do with anything and he wanted nothing to do with our offer."

-How could CSIS arrive at such an incredible conclusion - that Parmar was not what he seemed. This is how Olson described the Parmar enigma: "In intelligence, you can never

be one hundred per cent sure of anything. You can only weigh the evidence on the balance of probabilities. In his [Parmar's] case I am fairly certain but I am open to evidence to the contrary if there is any. Like I said earlier, this game is a wilderness of mirrors where there are images within images."

CSIS based its thesis on a profile of Parmar put together by its agents and analysts. It was a scenario that told the agency that this man, despite his Sikh spiel, was being used to actually destroy the expatriate Sikh movement.

In early 1989, Parmar disappeared. There were unsubstan-tiated reports of him surfacing in both India and Pakistan. Many Sikhs, however, believed he was safely hidden in British Colum-bia.

Talwinder Singh Parmar, the Living Martyr, remains very much the Living Riddle.

9

Mr. Singh- the name is a pseudonym - rarely passed up La chance to meet with Brij Mohan Lal, a vice-consul in charge of issuing visas at the Indian consulate in Toronto. Every time they met, either in restaurants or in Lal's apartment with its well-stocked liquor cabinet, Mr. Singh was presented with a hundred dollars. Whenever Lal beckoned, Mr. Singh came run-ning. Sometimes Mr. Singh, an ambitious but financially strug-gling Toronto businessman, arranged the meetings with Lal. After awhile, Mr. Singh grew quite fond of his growing collection of hundred-dollar bills.

In return, Mr. Singh was to spy on fellow members of the Canadian Sikh community and dutifully report the names and actions of anyone who displayed the slightest sympathy for the cause of Khalistan.

This proved to be an easy chore. After the 1984 invasion of the Golden Temple and the events of November 1 in India, when thousands of Sikh families were massacred by Hindus, there was hardly a Sikh in Canada who supported a united India. Mr. Singh had no trouble providing Lal and his fellow Indian intelligence agents posted to the consulate with reams of names of Khalistan supporters. He could have simply used the telephone directory, but Mr. Singh was willing to work for his fee.

"I was his number one man in Toronto," he boasted to the authors.

Mr. Singh saw nothing wrong with handing over the names of Sikhs who were exercising their right to freedom of expression.

He was aware of the fact but gave no thought to it , that the consulate was building files on each of the individuals, files that could and would be used to deny them the right to return for visits to India. There was also the possibility that the relatives of those on the list who still lived in India might come under investigation by the draconian Indian intelligence agencies and be harassed, arrested or jailed without cause.

Mr. Singh saw nothing but the hundred-dollar bills that sup-plemented the earnings of his small company. The money helped keep his business alive long enough for it to grow and prosper. But Mr. Singh eventually went beyond being Lal's hundred-dol-lar spy - he was recruited as an informant by an individual claiming to represent the Canadian Department of External Af-fairs.

In the spring of 1986, Mr. Singh met with Lal in the diplomat's apartment to discuss an extremely important assignment. Lal lived on the tenth floor of the Seneca Hills highrise near Finch Avenue and Don Mills. As Mr. Singh walked down the hall towards apartment 1004, he switched on a small tape recorder secreted inside the breast pocket of his jacket. As he shook hands with Lal and sat down to talk, Mr. Singh wasn't

thinking of the silently revolving tape pressed against his chest. He was wonder-ing how long it would take for another hundred-dollar bill to appear.

A translation of the tape revealed that Lal had a reward for Singh's loyal service: an all-expenses-paid trip to Pakistan to spy on a Sikh meeting. Mr. Singh provided the authors with copies of his seven tape-recorded meetings with Lal on the condition that his identity be concealed from the Canadian Sikh com-munity.

"Keep it secret where you got the invitation in case they keep track," said Lal. "It is possible they have kept some record."

Singh was offered $1,700 in U.S. funds to accept the assign-ment. Food and lodging would be provided at the conference, since it was an important gathering of Sikhs from India, Pakistan and elsewhere. Lal was asking a lot for his money.

He wanted Singh to videotape the entire proceeding. He wanted photos of every person in attendance and a record of anyone from the subcontinent with contacts overseas. He was ordered to speak vehemently against the government of India when he met any Sikh from Pakistan, and he was to watch especially for any delegates from the International Sikh Youth Federation. They agreed to meet again the next day, when Lal would deliver the money to cover Singh's expenses.

On that day, Singh drove to Lal's apartment and picked him up outside the front door. The tape recorder was tucked away in the headrest cover on the driver's seat.

Lal did not yet have the money. As they drove, he complained of his accommodations. The apartment was too small for some-one of his diplomatic stature but a suitable house carried a rent of $1,800 monthly. "India would scream bloody murder if I paid that much to rent a house," Lal sighed.

Since they were on the topic of money, Singh pushed for an increase in his stipend. "One hundred dollars a week is not enough," Singh stated. Lal did not agree and hinted about cor-ruption in the accounting offices in India. "Delhi multiplies the dollars by ten and that's how they count it," Lal said cryptically.

Before the meeting ended, Lal brought up the possibility of the two of them collaborating on a community television program that Lal claimed could be aired on the independent CHCH television station in Hamilton. Lal explained that various Indian government agencies would pay to have their propaganda-laced programs broadcast on a station that reached into Toronto, ad-ding, "You could collect the ad revenue, also."

There were already several locally produced Indian programs being broadcast on Toronto television stations, mostly during odd hours on the commercial channels and in regularly scheduled time slots on the tiny, all-ethnic MTV, Multicultural Television.

Singh was surprised by Lal's proposal, since a close friend of the diplomat's was already producing an Indian community program in Toronto.

The part-time television producer had close ties with the Hindu-Sikh Friendship Society, a group known for its links with the Indian government.

"He's like a black flag," Lal replied about his friend the television producer. "We can put him up any time. We can take him down any time.... He made whatever he made already but now his position is not that strong and he only nets about a hundred and fifty dollars a week." Mr. Singh, obviously, was not the only Canadian Sikh on the consulate's payroll.

Lal and Mr. Singh met quite often at a North York restaurant called Rascals, not far from the Finch subway station. On April 23, 1986, Singh sat in the restaurant and listened as Lal demanded that he follow specific details in planning the trip to Pakistan. "Pay by cash, not cheque," Lal demanded. "Use an unfamiliar travel agent." Lal also had a list of instructions but would not commit them to paper in his own handwriting, as Singh

devious-ly suggested. The meeting ended with Lal again failing to come up with the travel funds.

A short time later, Singh was back at Lal's apartment for more instructions on the Sikh conference. Lal now wanted him to make contact with radical Sikhs from Pakistan. "Pakistan is the major assignment," Lal said.

Once again, Lal promised that he would deliver the money the very next day. "In U.S. [funds]," Singh interjected, his patience wearing thin. As he reviewed the tape recordings while being interviewed for this book, Singh grinned and explained his comment: "I did not want to get shafted for thirty-four per cent [exchange premium]."

The following day Lal handed over the money during a meet-ing at the now-defunct Mardis Gras Restaurant in the fashionable Belmont Street area on Avenue Road. He had an admonition: "You've got a job, now do it right."

"I'll try my best," Singh replied, trying to sound sufficiently subservient.

"If you do a good job, there's a lot of future in it," Lal pledged.

Singh managed one more meeting before his assignment. The two met for a bon voyage drink at Lal's apartment, where the diplomat again spoke obsessively about moving to better quarters.

Upon Singh's return from Pakistan, Lal was still in the same apartment. "I didn't feel like coming back. People [in Pakistan] take such good care of you," Singh said pleasantly.

Lal's reply held out great promise for Singh's future in the world of espionage: "This is just the beginning. Just wait and see what happens next," Lal boasted.

During the debriefing, Singh revealed that the entire trip had been in jeopardy because he had travelled on an expired passport, but immigration officials in Pakistan and in the U.S. on his return failed to notice. Although shocked by his carelessness, Lal was eager to learn more about the conference.

Singh handed over a packet of photographs and the names of some Sikhs attending the conference but said that no Canadians were present. "I knew a lot of stuff I didn't pass on. I didn't pass on a lot of specifics.... I convinced him I worked hard but I steered him away from the Pakistani Sikhs," Singh recalled in an inter-view.

While Singh was in Pakistan, five other Canadian Sikhs were detained there for pushing and shoving Indian diplomats who had come to the Sikh temple. They faced charges of assault. He concocted a story for Lal's benefit about the five men trying surreptitiously to get into Punjab province from Pakistan.

"I told him there was a Sikh training camp. I exaggerated. I made it up. I wanted to tell him something," he recalled.

In the next few months, Singh received several more assign-ments ranging from the serious to the silly. Once he was asked to check out a Canadian-government foreign-aid agency with an office on Yonge Street, near the Davisville subway station. Lal believed that it was used by Canadian intelligence agents as a front for supporting the Khalistan movement in India.

"When Canada wants to create trouble, they use this agency," Lal told Singh. The notion was absurd, as Singh discovered when he walked into the office and found it was quite legitimate.

On another occasion, Singh was asked to investigate the back-ground of two Sikhs, one living in Nova Scotia and the other in Detroit, Michigan. The point of the search was to learn more about two men who, Lal claimed, assisted in a plan to purchase and ship arms to Punjab for use by the extremists. According to Lal, the RCMP had confirmed that the two Sikhs had arranged a meeting between Babbar Khalsa leader Talwinder Singh Parmar and a pair of brothers in Windsor, Ontario, to discuss a $200,000 arms purchase. The brothers, described as underworld charac-ters, supposedly had contact with arms merchants. Lal told Singh that the weapons deal never went beyond the discussion stage but he nonetheless wanted a careful watch kept on the situation. The RCMP also investigated Lal's claim but, contrary to his other allegation, never came up

with any evidence of a meeting between Parmar and the brothers, one of whom was identified by Lal as Heinrich Jacobsen. The only place the RCMP could locate anyone with such a name was in the pages of the Lyndon LaRouche propoganda publication Executive Intelligence Review. Investigators doubted such a person even existed.

Why would Singh play this game of double agent? His life, he said, was in turmoil after the Air-India bombing and he was trying to recover from a failed business venture. Other officials in the Indian consulate had drawn him into their disinformation campaign, and he was investigated for months as one of the suspects in the airplane bombing. In October 1985, while he was trying to get his life straightened out, a man claiming to be from External Affairs in Ottawa called him one day. The department believed, the man said, that the Indians were engaged in covert activities - namely, intelligence work - that went beyond their diplomatic duties. The man told him that his services could be valuable and asked if he would help them keep an eye on covert activities issuing from the Indian consulate.

Singh said he jumped at the chance to do something for his community but claims that he declined to take any money. Given the way his business prospered over the next two years, however, he probab-ly accepted a substantial amount.

In December 1985 the man called again, now saying that he was an aide to External Affairs Minister Joe Clark. He asked Singh how he could prove the truth of whatever he would be reporting. Singh said that he would surreptitiously tape-record his conversations with Lal and others. The man said that when the recordings were completed, he would arrange to have the tapes picked up. He also warned him, Singh says, that External would deny any involvement and he was on his own if he was found out.

It took a year until Singh called External officials and said he had a package of tapes ready for them. According to Singh, a man who described himself as a Mountie came to him and picked up the tapes. Singh said that he did not ask for the man's name, nor was it volunteered. That was his last contact with either the man or External Affairs.

Questioned closely by the authors over two hours, Singh ac-knowledged that the scenario he described was so bizarre that External could convincingly deny any involvement. He also ac-knowledged that he had acted as an informant for CSIS. He was asked whether, in fact, it was CSIS he had been working for. This would seem reasonable, since the agency was at odds with Ex-ternal, which did not want to upset its growing trade and politi-cal relationship with India. CSIS might have asked him to put forward the External tale, knowing that it would lead nowhere and the agency's tracks would be covered. Singh denied know-ingly having done the work for CSIS but agreed that perhaps it had been the agency - he would never know for sure.

CSIS agent Fred Gibson confirmed that the agency was work-ing on an investigation into the behaviour of Indian diplomats in Canada. Its findings - in regard to incidents ranging from the 1982 shooting of a Metro police officer at a demonstration outside the Indian consulate to the 1985 Air-India bombing - were turned over to External Affairs officials for review over the course of 1986.

The word out of the department, however, was that Canada was working on some type of pipeline deal with India and nothing would be done to strain relations between the two countries.

The pipeline story was true. A Canadian company was in the bidding for the biggest pipeline project in the world. The Cal-gary-based Nova Corporation, with External helping to open the doors, had bid on a pipeline deal in India worth about $1.9 billion. The natural gas pipeline project was to traverse deserts, ten rivers and lush farmland from India's west coast to the north, covering some sixteen hundred kilometres. Nova was competing against an Italian firm, a French-Japanese consortium and a Mexican firm. Nova's offer included costs for laying 450,000 tonnes of steel pipe to carry 18.5 million cubic metres of natural gas a day from two offshore oil and gas fields in western India to six big fertilizer plants being built in northern India. It was to be the longest pipeline in the world. In the end, despite a great deal of support from External Affairs, Nova did not win the project when a decision was made in 1986.

The importance of trade with India had been outlined in a letter of March 15, 1985, from External Affairs Minister Joe Clark to fellow Progressive Conservative MP Bob Horner, who repre-sented an area of Mississauga containing a large Sikh population. In the letter, Clark refused comment on the troubled situation in Punjab but wrote: "I strongly believe that India deserves close attention in the context of Canadian foreign policy, and we will be seeking to enhance the overall relationship. It is a vitally important country with which Canada has a growing economic relationship and, as you know, it is also the chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement."

Operations heads at CSIS such as Olson knew the External posture well from the days of the RCMP's Security Service.

The service, during its heyday of matching wits against the Soviet KGB in Ottawa, had faced similar pressure every time it un-covered Soviet agents in Canada. In his book on the Security Service, Men in the Shadows, John Sawatsky revealed how a Security Service agent spent an entire year determining that a Soviet embassy cultural officer was actually a KGB spy. External refused to expel the man. Sawatsky wrote: "External had to consider a variety of vested interests arising out of numerous government departments, and on balance expelling a foreign intelligence officer could be contrary to Canada's overall interest even though a clear case of espionage was established. If Canada was negotiating with the Soviet Union for a sale of wheat that would boost trade and reduce surplus stocks, External usually took the view that Canada's interests were better served by com-pleting the wheat sale."

Even when it wanted to expel a spy, Sawatsky wrote, External would do it in a way that would minimize diplomatic backlash and keep foreign relations on an even keel. For instance, it might wait until a diplomat's posting was finished before declaring him persona non grata. "External made other decisions the RCMP viewed as unfriendly. When foreign intelligence officers were expelled it too often was done quietly, without mention in the press. A silent expulsion disturbed the Force because they were denied the publicity that gave them good public exposure and a boost in morale, and most importantly, generated additional evidence of Soviet intelligence activity. Each time newspapers announced an expulsion the RCMP received phone calls provid-ing further

information.... While External's low-key non-confron-tationist approach worked well for individual cases, it backfired in the long run. It represented softness."

With regard to India and Canada's Sikh community, External could not ignore the mounting evidence indefinitely. In 1986-after Nova Corporation had lost the pipeline bid India and External Affairs reached a deal allowing the Toronto consul general, Surinder Malik, to transfer out of Canada without any publicity. He had said in an interview that he was expecting a bigger posting with a promotion to ambassador.

As it happened, he was made an ambassador, but in Qatar, a small Persian Gulf sheikhdom referred to in diplomatic circles as "a hole in the ground." Another decision, to transfer Consul General Jagdish Sharma from Vancouver to Tokyo, was shelved, and he remained in Vancouver. In this case, External had backed down.

By now the Sikh community was openly attacking the federal government over the activities of Indian diplomats and there had been some newspaper publicity. Reluctantly, Joe Clark, on a trade mission to New Delhi in February 1987, took a list of names of diplomats collected by CSIS. Beginning within a month, three diplomats were removed from Canada. Among them was Brij Mohan Lal, the vice-consul in Toronto and Singh's handler. Gurinder Singh, a superintendent with India's Central Bureau of Investigation and a consul in Vancouver, was also transferred by India in March. Later that year, M.K. Dhar, a counsellor at the Indian High Commission in Ottawa, was transferred out of the country. There was no publicity, but the information was leaked to the Globe and Mail by CSIS and featured on the front page. The story was vociferously denied by the Indian High Commission, while External Affairs refused any comment, saying that it did not speak publicly about any intelligence operation conducted by other countries.

Like his predecessor as vice-consul, Davinder Singh Ahluwalia, Brij Mohan Lal was an intelligence operative under diplomatic cover. Although he was about fifty-five when he was posted to Toronto in 1985, he looked younger than his years. He was short, stocky and wore the traditional clipped mustache that was the hallmark of Indian army officers

- a holdover from the British Raj. He had a slow but laconic manner of speaking that carried a tone of reason and logic.

Lal, like Ahluwalia before him, was generous with the consulate's duty-free liquor supply.

During his first meeting with one of the book's authors - Zuhair Kashmeri, who was on an assignment for the Globe he made a proposition. "I've got a deal for you," he offered. "We get Scotch at rock-bottom prices, something like five dollars. I can let you have a few from our quota.... North America is expensive and one of our jobs is help-ing our people from the old country." The offer was not accepted but he had made clear his intention.

He revealed to Kashmeri that one of his goals was to discredit the International Sikh Youth Federation and its coordinator, Lakhbir Singh Brar, the nephew of the slain soldier-priest Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. CSIS had also noticed Lal's keen interest in the ISYF.

On November 20, 1985, two days before the Globe began pub-lication of a three-part series on Indian spying in Canada, for which Consul General Surinder Malik had already been inter-viewed, Lal called up Kashmeri and sought a meeting over drinks. He selected Pete's, a noisy pub adjacent to the busy Bloor and Yonge subway station in Toronto and near the consulate.

Lal told Kashmeri that it was his intention to clean up the intelligence operation being run out of the consulate, not to propagate it. He spoke about his background in the Indian army, in which he reached the rank of brigadier before moving to the foreign service. Drinking heavily throughout the lengthy meet-ing, he began speaking after a fourth martini - about the previous five years and the exciting work of being an intelligence officer stationed in Punjab. The Indian army, foreseeing the troubles in Punjab with the rise of Bhindranwale, had directed its intelligence officers to mount domestic spying operations against the soldier-priest and his group, he said. He acknow-

ledged that the group known as the Third Agency had been set up but denied it had allowed arms to be smuggled to Bhindranwale's supporters in the Golden Temple. The Third Agency was a task force with the mandate to divide, destabilize and destroy the Khalistan movement in Punjab through the use of undercover officers, paid informants and agents provocateurs, he said.

He claimed that he personally carried out surveillance of Bhindranwale while accompanied by five Indian army marksmen. "We followed him all the way to Bombay, six hundred kilometres away, and back once," he said. "At one time we had decided to eliminate him. If it were not for orders from the prime minister's office, he would have died much before Operation Bluestar." He gave credit, however, to his marksmen for eliminating five other extremists.

The Punjab assignment left him exhausted, he said, and he was assigned to the Indian diplomatic resting ground in Guyana on the northeast coast of South America. "That was a well-deserved rest. So few people came in for visas that when they did it was time for a celebration." He said that he also served a stint in Iran.

Lal pressed the Globe to publish a lengthy article on the Inter-national Sikh Youth Federation and Lakhbir Singh Brar, noting that the group was becoming aggressively ambitious in the separatist movement and taking political control of Canadian Sikh temples. He insisted - without offering any evidence that the ISYF was a terrorist operation and was linked to the Air-India bombing. Lal, after promising to change the ways the Indian consulate operated in Canada, was getting off to a poor start. He, too, was attempting to play the disinformation game through a major newspaper just as Consul General Surinder Malik had done.

Lal spoke of his intense dislike of Malik, but noting that Malik would soon be leaving Canada, he tried to dissuade the Globe from running its already-written articles on the consul general and his disinformation work after the Air-India disaster. Malik was "as good as dead, why kill him any more, he is leaving." After Malik left, Lal added, he would make sure that the Sikh community was treated properly by the consulate. Lal

drunkenly promised to end the consulate's routine practice of handing out cheap duty-free liquor as bribes. "You know how it is with our community.

A crate of booze will work wonders. But tell your contacts in Ottawa that the consulate will be a healthy place once again. I am going to make it a clean place. In fact, I could even be an asset to the Canadians."

Contacts in CSIS were perplexed by Lal's use of the word "asset." In intelligence jargon, it is a buzzword for "paid inform-ant." Considering the late hour and his bellyful of booze, it was hard to say whether Lal was trying to send out a message by using the word.

Lal was fingered by CSIS as an Indian intelligence operative in early 1986, but because of the pipeline proposal involving Nova Corporation, External Affairs did not arrange for his trans-fer out of the country until March 1987. In between, he had plenty of time to infiltrate and influence the East Indian community in Toronto.

According to Gurbachan "Joe" Madpuri, the Mississauga fac-tory owner and brother of the suspected Third Man, Shera Singh, Lal provoked deep bitterness between Canadian Sikhs and Hin-dus. Madpuri said that Lal helped set up more than a hundred Hindu groups and temples in Canada, using them to push India's point of view with local and federal politicians. Madpuri may have exaggerated the number out of bitterness, since his own influence with the Toronto consulate was weakened follow-ing Ahluwalia's departure in 1985.

The Indian High Commission insisted that Lal was not being sent out of Canada at the request of External Affairs. Instead it claimed that he was being transferred back to India for the final six months before he was due to retire from the foreign service. After leaving Canada, however, Lal surfaced in Washington, D.C., as a diplomat with the Indian embassy.

Lal, of course, never followed through on his late-night promise to straighten out the affairs of the Toronto consulate, as the tape-recorded conversations with Singh revealed.

In one of their final discussions, Singh spoke with Lal about making contact with his replacement at the Toronto consulate.

Lal told him that when the new contact telephoned, he was to ask if the man was from a specific village in India. The man would reply with the name of another town, and the two would then arrange a meeting at a restaurant in Yorkville near the consulate. Nearly two years after Lal's departure, Singh was still waiting for the call.

"I don't know if they are being very cautious or if they suspect me," he said. "Maybe they do. Who cares?"

10

It was shortly after 4 p.m. on October 26, 1988, that the KLM Royal Dutch Airline jet began its descent towards Toronto's Pearson Airport. Among its passengers was a diminutive Sikh named Balkar Singh. As the jet cleared the cloud cover, Balkar suddenly realized that he was truly home free. To him, Canada was familiar territory. The forty-year-old Canadian owned an airport limousine that he had not driven in a year.

The first person to greet him was his seven-year-old daughter, Navjeet. "Daddy, we're glad to have you back!" she cried as she ran towards Balkar. His wife and two sons were not far behind. External Affairs officials milled about as newspaper photog-raphers and television camera crews recorded the homecoming. They were followed by an official Sikh reception committee formed by Balkar's friends and by a few officials of the Interna-tional Sikh Youth Federation who were doubling as members of the Toronto-based Sikh Human Rights Group.

"I felt like kissing the ground of Canada," said Balkar, almost in tears as he spoke briefly with reporters.

He had good reason to be happy. He had spent a year wrongly imprisoned in a Punjab jail, Mal Mandi in Amritsar, the most feared of "terrorist" interrogation centres. And in Balkar's case, Mal Mandi had lived up to its dreaded reputation.

Balkar had returned to India on October 5, 1987, for the first time in thirteen years to visit his cancer-stricken sister in Amrit-sar and see some old school friends. Immigrants love to show off their wealth on such visits to the old country and Balkar was no different.

He was making arrangements for a stag for his old gang of chums when his nearly year-long ordeal began on November 2.

"I get a hotel room in the same city.... I get many friends who came to see me. The way our culture is I arrange the hotel [room] because I thought we all, I mean gents, we gonna stay in the hotel and all the ladies are gonna stay at home," he said in an interview for this book.

"About nine o'clock somebody knocked [on] the room of the hotel. I go out and see there wasn't nobody. After few minutes two gentlemen came in with revolvers saying 'Catch him, catch him' like that. I was in panic. I thought maybe they are after money or like that and I thought I talk to them and I said, 'Come in here and sit and talk,' and they said, 'No! We don't have to sit! We are going to arrest you.' "

Balkar said he was led blindfolded from the Amritsar Interna-tional Hotel and driven by jeep to Mal Mandi prison. He said that he was not overwhelmed by fear because he was sure some type of mistake had been made. He expected that Indian police would treat him just as well as Canadian police once the problem was straightened out. "I thought we would sit, talk and I would answer questions and no problem."

Instead, he told the Indian Supreme Court in an affidavit seek-ing charges against the officers, he was stripped naked and put through fourteen hours of unrelenting torture. Balkar said that he was first beaten with leather straps. His hands and feet were tied and he was hung from the ceiling by his bound hands. A police officer spread the rope between his bound ankles and sat swinging on the rope until "I believe my hands and shoulders were turned the wrong way." He was allowed neither the relief nor dignity of passing out from the intense pain. "I cried lots," he said after his return. "You can't be unconscious. If you be unconscious they throw water on your face, they close your nose and mouth and you wake up."

The worst was yet to come, he recalled softly, as he sat in a familiar, comfortable chair at his home in Etobicoke, a Toronto suburb.

He described forthrightly the string of horrible and painful punishments inflicted on the most sensitive parts of his body.

"The second [stage] was they asked me to sit on a chair and [they] start shocking. One wire of that shocking system they tie to my penis and the other one they start shocking on my rectum, chest, ears, temples, teeth, tongue and the worst one - my nose. When they started into the nose my head shake up [and] I don't know what's happening. I thought I am killed now."

Balkar believed that he was facing death, he said, yet he had no idea why he was being treated in such an inhuman fashion. It was not until he was shaking with pain, cowering and humiliated, that the accusations against him were made. At first he was accused of being a supporter of the militant extremists fighting in Punjab for independence. "They asked me: You come up here to support the militants and you're a Canadian, you're a Canadian bastard.' "

In the next breath they changed course and accused him of being a spy for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, even though he had hardly heard of the domestic spy agency, which, by federal law, must limit its activities to Canada. "What I could tell them? They kept beating and asking: 'Tell us why they send you here?' Either the CSIS or militant group? And I have nothing to do with anything."

During the interrogation and torture, various documents were placed in front of him that he willingly signed without reading in a desperate hope that the ordeal would end. But it just kept on getting worse.

After ten hours, he said he felt he was "like meat we throw out with the flies and all that. I heard their conversation and one said, You got all his belongings?' and another said, 'Yes.' They said, 'Petrol is ready? Okay burn him. By the time my condition was [such] that I say thanks to God if they do that, it is unbearable. I preferred the death at that time.

I have no complaints to the God even, I thought I will [give] thanks to the God if they kill me now."

The jailers would not give in to his desire to die, and the accusations against him intensified. He was accused of support-ing Punjab militants with Canadian funds and of

possessing nineteen rounds of ammunition when he was arrested. He was questioned about the Air-India bombing, the police demanding that he detail his role in the disaster. (Balkar, for the record, was never even remotely considered as a suspect by the RCMP or CSIS.)

Despite the confessions signed under the most extreme duress, Balkar was never charged with a crime. He was held under provisions of the draconian Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act, which allows authorities to keep anyone in custody for up to a year without being charged. Balkar endured nearly a year of confinement in the overcrowded prison, lacking running water and toilet facilities.

His release and removal from the country was swift and sud-den. He was taken from the prison and put aboard a plane in Amritsar and escorted to New Delhi, where he was transferred to a flight home. He was given no explanation for his detention and came home without an apology from the country that had treated him so harshly.

The Balkar affair revealed the limits of Canadian influence in India. After Balkar's arrest, it took Canadian High Commission officials more than three weeks to gain permission to see Balkar in jail, and even then their request to have him examined by a doctor was refused. External Affairs filed a protest against his detention after it became apparent, in the words of one Canadian diplomat, that he had been subjected to "physical mistreatment." Indian officials ignored continued efforts by the Canadian high commissioner to secure Balkar's release.

Although Balkar says that he was not a member of the Inter-national Sikh Youth Federation in Toronto, the group, which supports the Khalistan movement, took up his case.

Some members of the ISYF acting for the Sikh Human Rights Group, which is backed by Amnesty International, lodged a formal complaint against India with the United Nations Committee on Human Rights. Amnesty wrote letters to the government in New Delhi on Balkar's behalf.

Balkar's lawyer in India, Rupinder Singh Sodhi, who filed the affidavit in the Supreme Court of India on his behalf, believes that Balkar was used by the government of India to prove its contention that there was no indigenous terrorist network in Punjab, just the oft-blamed, ubiquitous "foreign hand," an excuse the government has used for years to explain away its internal problems.

India may have had another motive. The Canadian govern-ment at the time was once again feeling pressure from India to crack down on Canadian Sikh organizations that were allegedly providing support for the separatist movement. Balkar may have been used by the Indians for propaganda purposes to mislead External Affairs Minister Joe Clark. If Clark were to become convinced of Canadian Sikh extremist involvement in Punjab, perhaps Canada would pay more attention to the need to help its friendly trading partner.

The Indian press was full of conflicting stories about the Canadian connection. One newspaper accused CSIS of support-ing and furthering Sikh terrorism in India. Balkar was described as the "dreaded terrorist" and the "paymaster" of the ultra-violent Khalistan Liberation Force. His arrest was called "the most significant proof yet" of a link between Canadian Sikhs and Punjab terror. The stories were not written as allegations made by police but as actual fact.

Curiously, Balkar was forced into confessing membership in the World Sikh Organization, which had never before been ac-cused of participating directly or indirectly in the Punjab fight-ing. India may have felt a need to make a case against the WSO. It already was holding in detention another Canadian Sikh accused of terrorist activity,

and he had confessed to being as-sociated with the International Sikh Youth Federation.

Daljit Singh Sekhon of Mississauga had been arrested in Sep-tember 1987 in Punjab, two months before Balkar's detention. He was accused of smuggling weapons from Pakistan into Punjab for use by terrorists. Police said that he confessed to the crime, and

yet the only charge brought against him was for entering India without proper travel documents. Sekhon was sentenced on the charge to a year in jail, but he was still detained after Balkar was released, some fourteen months after his arrest. Eventually, he too was freed.

Following the two arrests, India had the so-called proof it required that Canadian Sikhs were playing an active role in the Punjab fight. It could hold its accusations up to the Canadian government even though the evidence was fabricated and came at the expense of human suffering through torture.

External Affairs Minister Joe Clark reacted in a manner that could have only had the Indian government congratulating itself for a job well done. On December 7, 1987, the premier of Manitoba, Howard Pawley, received a strange and unexpected letter from Clark.

It read in part: "I am writing to you concerning possible in-vitations to you or members of your government to attend func-tions organized by members of the Canadian Sikh community. The majority of these invitations are valuable....

"There are however, three Sikh organizations which exist largely to advocate the creation of an independent Sikh state, known as 'Khalistan.' These three organizations are the Babbar Khalsa, the International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF), and the World Sikh Organization. Some members of these organizations have also engaged in or promote violent activities aimed at the Indian interests in Canada and elsewhere. The activities of these organizations have been a significant irritant in our relations with India.

The government of India has taken particular excep-tion when elected officials attend functions sponsored by these organizations.

" I would appreciate your cooperation in avoiding events and activities which could be perceived as supporting the Sikh organizations mentioned above or their objective in the creation of an independent Sikh State."

In the letter, Clark asked Pawley to make External's wishes known to his caucus members and to urge them to call External Affairs for any more information on the three groups. He sent identical letters to six other premiers of provinces with large Sikh populations, among them Ontario and British Columbia.

The implications of Clark's policy were clear: these groups were promoting terrorism. It seemed that the interests of the Indian government superceded the rights of Canadian citizens of Sikh origin to freedom of expression, and these "irritants" were standing in the way of an improved relationship between Canada and India, with its growing demand for foreign techr ol-ogy, skills and marketable goods. If India had been painting with a broad brush a portrait of Canadian Sikhs as die-hard sup-porters of terrorist behaviour, Clark was filling in the detailed work.

The letter was not out of character for the External Affairs minister. Clark had made a habit of yielding to the pressures and demands of the Indian government. In this respect an article in the Hindustan Times, a leading New Delhi daily known for its pro-government viewpoint, reaches directly into the heart of the matter. The article, headlined "On the Edge of Trouble," was published December 16, 1985, on the opinion page and written by the newspaper's Washington and Canada correspondent, Bharat Karnad. Its focus was the Sikh situation in Canada and Canadian foreign policy. Under the subheading "Clark's Objec-tive," Karnad wrote that External had its way in forcing then RCMP commissioner Robert Simmonds to hammer out, in the wake of the Air-India bombing, an information-sharing agreement with Indian Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari.

This, Karnad said, "apparently means that the majority in the Canadian cabinet, including the Prime Minister, has plonked for the am-bitious foreign policy objective Mr. Clark has been working towards at the expense of Sikh rights... Canada as the North-South bridge is taken seriously by the Progressive Conservative government... Mark Lortie in the Prime Minister's Office whom I met last summer in Ottawa

elaborated on the similarities be-tween the developing countries and Canada, which, he pointed out, was a major exporter of raw materials, unfinished products, importer of high technology, capital and finished goods, with a good portion of its industry owned by foreign [American] inter-ests. This by way of saying that Canada, belonging to both camps, could best facilitate the North-South 'dialogue.'

"But for Canada to be an effective interlocutor between the industrialized North and the impoverished South, Ottawa has determined, Mr. Lortie said, the art of cultivating close and en-during ties with leading nations of the South, particularly India.... The party therefore expects a deeper Third World market penetration by Canadian business to accompany Canada's role as the bridge. India, with a consequential middle class larger than the Canadian population and a burgeoning consumerist habit, reportedly excites hardheaded ideologues in the ruling party who espy a vast and promising market.... Many of them believe that the present volume of Indo-Canadian trade averaging 500 million dollars annually could easily be made to triple or quad-ruple."

Karnad went on to warn: "The Indian government would be well advised to rid its Canada policy of the Punjab crisis men-tality and leave Canadian resident Sikhs well enough alone."

According to Karnad's thesis, the bottom line was trade, and the less Ottawa did or said to aggravate the leading Third World nation, the better off it would be economically. Indeed, Clark has gone out of his way to avoid doing or saying anything that might put a strain on high-level relations between Canada and India.

Clark was on a trade mission to India during the Hindu riots after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Scores of Sikh families were wiped out, but there was not a word of concern from Clark, then or later, even though it became clear that the members of the ruling Congress Party had helped incite the massacres.

There were other examples of Clark's insensitivity towards Canadian Sikhs. In December 1986 the Kamloops News ran an article headlined "No Meeting for Sikhs." The first paragraph read: "Canadian Sikhs are not going to get a meeting with Exter-nal

Affairs Minister Joe Clark no matter how hard they try, Clark's press secretary Bill Chambers said Thursday." The article quoted Sikh groups as saying that they feared India was portray-ing Canadian Sikhs as terrorists and they wanted a meeting with Clark to dispel the claims. Chambers replied that they should take up the issue with the federal ministry of multiculturalism or the solicitor general. He also denied that Canada's policy towards Sikhs was influenced by the Indian government and warned: "People who come to Canada should not import "he social and societal problems of their own country." The Sikhs in British Columbia, it should be noted, are largely second- and third-generation Canadians.

In early 1987 Clark's department interfered with an application by the Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada for a grant from the ministry of multiculturalism to set up a Sikh studies chair at the University of British Columbia. External Affairs claimed that the grant could harm bilateral relations with India. Its posture was criticized by most of the Canadian media. In February 1987 Clark agreed to field questions at a University of Toronto conference on Sikhism. Toronto lawyer Sher Singh con-fronted him publicly about the issue of the Sikh studies chair. The next morning, the lawyer was informed by External that it was withdrawing its objection.

On the heels of his December 1987 letter to the provincial premiers denouncing the three Sikh organizations and after Chambers told the Sikhs to take up their complaints with the multicultural ministry Clark refused to appear before the House of Commons' multicultural committee to answer ques-tions about his allegations of Sikh terrorism. He went instead before the justice committee and said that the World Sikh Or-ganization should "stop advocating the dismemberment of a friendly country [India]."

His statement outraged two members of Parliament, Svend Robinson of the New Democrats and Liberal John Nunziatta. They demanded to know by what right Clark could force any Canadian community to change its democratic objectives. Fur-ther, since Clark had argued that the same reasoning did not apply to Lithuanians, Latvians, Ukrainians and others seeking independence from the Soviet Union (he was, after all, talking about "friendly countries"), his words displayed a blatant double standard.

In 1988 Clark personally intervened in an immigration depart-ment refugee hearing concerning a former Indian army major, Santokh Singh Bagga, who was being granted sanctuary in Canada. Clark wrote to the immigration ministry that Bagga was a security threat and was wanted in India in the assassination of the Indian army general who had led the Golden Temple raid. He took this initiative even though India had not asked for Bagga's extradition on criminal charges but had only broached the subject with the RCMP.

In the fall of 1988, there came another revealing blow to the Sikh community when Clark told staff writers and editors of the Vancouver Sun at an editorial meeting that it was his government's responsibility to help moderate Sikhs wrest con-trol of their community organizations from a handful of ex-tremists. Clark left the impression that the Sikh community and its temples were being overpowered by bands of extremists.

Clark was right to be critical of the Babbar Khalsa, the most militant of all Sikh organizations in Canada. But even the Babbar Khalsa, for all the publicity it enjoyed, never had a hard-core membership of more than forty or fifty, although it did have the ability to raise large amounts of money.

Clark's attitude towards the World Sikh Organization was downright unfair. The ISYF maintained good relations with CSIS. Once, in 1987, CSIS agents passed along a warning to the ISYF's international coordinator, Lakhbir Singh, that an Indian youth whose father had died in Punjab was in Toronto and could try to assassinate the organization's leader. During the visit to Vancouver of Rajiv Gandhi in October 1987 for the Common-wealth Conference, the ISYF pledged full cooperation with CSIS and the Mounties to ensure that there were no assassination attempts on Gandhi's life. Demonstrations staged against Gandhi were well controlled and restricted to areas outside a security ring around the site of the conference.

In a statement after the Clark letter was made public, Gian Singh Sandhu of the WSO said: "As president of the World Sikh Organization, I am prepared to put my office and reputation on the line. If he [Clark] or his ministry can provide documentary evidence

[of wrongdoing] beyond a reasonable doubt that would stand up in a Canadian court I am prepared to resign as president immediately.... In fairness, I ask Mr. Clark to do the same. If he cannot fully prove his accusations, I believe he owes it to the Sikh community which he has maligned, to seven Premiers whom he has misled and to numerous elected officials whom he has misinformed, to resign as Minister of External Affairs."

Typically, there was no response from Clark. And despite his claim in the letter to the premiers that they or any other elected official could call External Affairs for more information, Clark either could not or would not back up his allegations.

Martin Dolin, a former New Democrat member of the Manitoba legislature, views the letter with disdain, especially since he was the one acting on his own as an individual member of the legislature who disclosed it to the media and exposed Clark's real feelings about Canadian Sikhs to the public.

Dolin and another Manitoba provincial politician, Gary Doer, were planning to attend a dinner organized by the World Sikh Organization in Vancouver when they received a copy of Clark's letter from Pawley. Dolin said in an interview that he called External and "Clark's people sent me a packet of information again naming the WSO and the ISYF and the Babbar whatever as the terrorist groups." Dolin then asked Clark for proof. He said he sent two telexes without getting a response to either one. Meanwhile the dinner went on without the presence of the two Manitoba politicians.

"I was pretty ticked off," Dolin said. "I am a provincial politician. I rely on External for foreign affairs. I get a note from our premier's office saying this organization is violent. I don't get any proof from Clark. Meanwhile, I find out that there were academics at the dinner, they had [a] discussion, a very interest-ing one that I would have liked to take part in. There was no violence, no action, no promotion of violence and that's all there was."

Dolin had another good reason to be angry. Adhering to Clark's advice contributed to his election loss. As a result of his absence from the dinner and the failure of the NDP to attack Clark over the letter, Dolin became a political casualty in the 1988 Manitoba election. The Sikhs living in his riding, including his own executive assistant, voted overwhelmingly for the Liberals who had denounced Clark's letter.

While Dolin's requests for proof were ignored by Clark, he was sent a package of information anonymously that he believed originated with the Indian High Commission in Ottawa. Amidst the material, which purported to contain details of Sikh terrorist support in Canada, were publications put out by American right-wing propagandist Lyndon LaRouche. More specifically, the package contained accusations against Yoram Hamizrachi, a former colonel in the Israeli defence forces who taught conflict studies at the University of Manitoba. A gregarious individual, Hamizrachi was deeply involved in multicultural affairs in Winnipeg.

He had appeared on Sikh multicultural shows, and his wife, Beate, had done a master's thesis on the Khalistan cause that was critical of the government of India. In the LaRouche publication Yoram was described as an Israeli intelligence agent from the Mossad who was stationed in Winnipeg to help Sikhs in a gunrunning operation to Punjab.

The tragic part of all this disinformation was that some very real and damaging material on India was being lost in headlines about Sikh terrorism. For instance, in August 1988 Amnesty In-ternational released a report called India: A Review of Human Rights Violations. In this report, Amnesty noted that the largest democracy in the world had passed laws that literally gave it the power of life and death over people. Among them was the Na-tional Security Act (NSA), a measure that allowed detentions without trial for a year (two years in Punjab). This was supple-mented by the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA), which allowed a one-year detention and trials under "widely-defined terrorist acts." In addition, the TADA took away the presumption of innocence and put the burden of proof on the accused if the prosecution produced a confession made to anyone, not just to a police officer. Said Amnesty: "In some instances the TADA and the NSA have been used in combination to keep people in detention for several

years without trial. This has been the case in Punjab. In March, 1987 Julio Ribeiro, the then Director General of Police in Punjab (now special advisor for counter terrorism) was quoted as saying: 'We have put 52 such persons [political detainees] away for two years under the Na-tional Security Act. Then we will try them under TADA and that should keep them in custody for another year or two.'

"In March, 1988 Rajiv Gandhi's government passed the 59th amendment to the Constitution of India, permitting it to proclaim an emergency in Punjab on the vaguely defined grounds of 'internal disturbance' where 'the integrity of India is threatened.' [Under the amendment] security forces... would be entitled to shoot anyone at will."

Amnesty cited as well the Special Armed Forces Powers Act, under which "the armed forces, including the former Security Force and the Central Reserve Police Force, were given increased powers to conduct searches and shoot on sight people they believed were carrying out unlawful activities. The act also grants immunity from prosecution to members of the security forces when exercising their powers under the act." Amnesty reported rampant allegations of staged encounters where police simply killed a suspect and then announced that he died in a police-terrorist "encounter." Amnesty said that an Indian press report of October 10, 1987, quotes the following statement by a superintendent of police: "Terrorists who had committed five or more than five murders were killed by police after they were caught." In such "extrajudicial killings," Amnesty claimed, police were rarely killed or even injured during encounters but the victims "have usually been killed outright rather than wounded." Amnesty criticized the Indian government for failing to have these allegations investigated by an independent, impar-tial body. Access to Punjab for outside observers is "severely restricted," the report noted.

Elly Van Gerderen, Amnesty International's Asia specialist in Montreal, said that "encounter" killings in India are not restricted to Punjab but, with the use of the draconian laws, have happened all over the country, even in states where there is no

violence. "A lot of those laws are used in other provinces or states, for instance Gujarat [in western India], where there are no patterns of political violence. The same is true all over the country. The same is true of torture, deaths in custody and other kinds of human rights violations."

One case illustrating the work of Indian police death squads concerned a brother of Tejinder Singh Kaloe, the Hamilton Sikh acquitted of the June 1986 charges of conspiracy to commit sabotage in India. The investigation leading up to the charges involved hundreds of pages of wiretapped and bugged conver-sations, including Kaloe's telephone conversations with his brother, Balbir Singh, in Punjab.

Details of the investigation were given by the RCMP to the Indian police. On July 2, two weeks after his brother was arrested and charged in Canada, Balbir Singh was shot and killed in Punjab. In an affidavit filed in court during the Hamilton conspiracy case, an Indian police inspector claimed that Balbir Singh had died from wounds suffered in a gun battle with the bodyguards of a local village politician. How-ever, Kaloe's tenacious defence lawyer, Michael Code, a constitu-tional and human-rights expert, investigated further.

Code said in an interview: "We were suspicious about how this had come about because the brother was referred to in the Canadian intelligence extensively.

"So we wrote to External Affairs expressing our concern and saying the shooting of the brother may have had some connec-tion to the intelligence sharing going on between Indian police and Canadian police and we asked External to have the embassy in New Delhi investigate the matter. Mr. Clark wrote back refus-ing to investigate the matter saying it was an internal Indian issue.

"We subsequently gathered further information, the post mor-tem report of the brother. The post mortem showed that he died of a contact wound at the back of the head in which the gunshot was travelling downwards through the body and it had left blackening and charring around the edges of the wound indicating that the gun had either been in contact with the back of the neck or else within inches of the back of the neck. This

obviously was consistent with an execution and was inconsistent with the sworn affidavit filed by the Indian police in Hamilton."

Code said he again wrote to External Affairs with this addi-tional information, which strongly indicated "that Indian police were filing perjured affidavits in Canadian courts." Code also produced affidavits from the relatives of Balbir Singh in India who said that when they viewed the body before cremation his fingernails had been pulled out and there were other signs of torture.

But, Code said, External again refused to investigate the matter and "essentially sloughed it off."

Code believed that Canada had leverage with India at the time because the two countries were about to sign an extradition treaty that India saw as highly desirable. Canadian aid to India was another lever. In the last forty years, India has received close to $2 billion in direct Canadian aid the largest amount given to any country. Given these facts, said Code, Canada had the opportunity to demand that India honour basic human rights. "It certainly seemed to me as a matter of fundamental human decen-cy that a country should not be sending vast amounts of money and signing extradition treaties with a country where the police appear to be executing the brothers of Canadian Sikhs after receiving police intelligence from Canadians and misusing it.... You can only contrast this with what would have happened if there was information that the Soviet police were executing the brothers of Canadian citizens. It just seemed to me to be a blatant double standard."

Corporal Pierre Belanger, an RCMP spokesman in Ottawa, would not discuss the department's sharing of information with India, but when speaking generally about the material passed on to police agencies outside of Canada, he said, "Once we give the information, we don't have control over it."

Within External Affairs, which is run as a white Anglo-Saxon bastion, there is scant evidence of any sensitivity towards the issues faced by the Canadian Sikh community.

An internal sur-vey conducted by External in June 1988 showed that, of the 2,363 officer-level positions in the department, only 9 (or 0.38 per cent) were held by individuals of Indo-Pakistani descent and none of these individuals were in top decision-making positions where they could influence Canadian foreign policy. Of the 2,095 support staff, only 21 (or 0.57 per cent) were Indo-Pakistani.

Yet Clark's attitude cannot be blamed entirely on his depart-ment, since he himself was fully aware of what had been going on between the government of India and Sikhs in Canada.

Bryan Johnson, the Globe and Mail correspondent in India in 1987, told the authors that he was briefed by Joe Clark on February 6, 1987, while the External Affairs minister was in New Delhi. Clark told Johnson that Canada wanted CSIS and the Central Bureau of Intelligence's Research and Analysis Wing to have an informa-tion-sharing agreement, since it would be useful for Canada to get Indian intelligence files on Sikhs. " 'So far, the Indian Govern-ment has not accepted the conditions that are customary in our (security-intelligence) arrangements with other countries about the sharing of intelligence information, " Johnson quoted Clark as saying. "If there is going to be a special security arrangement with India, it is going to be according to the same rules that apply to other countries. I can't tell you what the problem is [blocking the agreement). The rules principally have to do with, in effect, keeping the game on the field and not allowing a latitude that is not generally available to other countries with which we have an arrangement.' " Johnson interpreted this statement to mean that Indian intelligence had thus far not played by the rules and was unwilling to change.

Ottawa's attitude towards its Sikh minority was a sad footnote to the extensive damage done to the Canadian Sikh community by the covert operations of the Indian government intelligence agencies. Consider an opinion poll conducted in Montreal in the summer of 1988 by Tandemar Research Inc. for the Macauliffe Institute of Sikh Studies at the University of Toronto. The poll sought to trace prejudice towards visible minorities, including the Sikhs, in Montreal. Half of the 250 persons polled were English-speaking and half were francophones. The results were what the Sikhs had feared the turban had become synonymous with violence.

Thirty per cent of the Montrealers polled said they perceived a prejudice against Sikhs. The figure was slightly higher than that determined for prejudices directed at minorities in general. Sikhs were third on the prejudice scale after blacks and Haitians both larger immigrant groups in Quebec.

Eighty-five per cent said that they knew nothing or little about the Sikhs, and only 18 per cent actually knew any Sikhs. Al-though Sikhs are the most industrious of people in their native India, only 19 per cent of those surveyed said that they believed Sikhs were hard-working members of the community. Just more than 60 per cent considered Sikhs untrustworthy.

But whether or not they knew anything about Sikhs, a sig-nificant number had strong, unprompted reactions when asked the question, "What comes to mind when you hear the word Sikhs?" Forty-three per cent used terms such as the following: revolt, conflict, riots in India, troublemakers, bringing trouble here, bombings, terrorism, violence, fanatics, extremists, fighters, warriors, hostile, don't like them, bad impression, shot Gandhi, fighting with Hindus. Only 14 per cent saw the Sikhs as a group suffering oppression and seeking independence in their own country.

The perceptions of the Sikhs held by Montrealers, and without doubt by other Canadians, are largely a result of the Indian government's campaign to slur the Sikh community in Canada. And, despite the already-entrenched negative impressions, the Indian government has not relented in its quest to interfere in the lives of the Canadian Sikhs.

Early in 1988, the wires from External Affairs into the offices of CSIS and the Mounties were humming again. Another note from New Delhi had arrived, this time warning that the Interna-tional Sikh Youth Federation had drawn up a hit list of Indian diplomats and Indian targets in Canada. India wanted the matter investigated. CSIS and the Metro

Toronto Police, who were asked to assist in the investigation by the RCMP, had identical reactions to the note: India was starting another propaganda campaign. This time the country that had cried wolf so often before would not be followed blindly by Canada's law enforcement and intel-ligence agencies. The Indians had lost the trust of their counterparts in Canada, and now they would be watched along with the Sikhs.

one Metro Toronto Police intelligence branch officer Said: "When I got the note my first reaction was we'd better put surveillance on 2 Bloor West."

The address is the location of the Indian consulate in Toronto.

Sources

Much of the material in the book is based on interviews conducted by Zuhair Kashmeri for the Globe and Mail, Toronto, since 1980, and Brian McAndrew for the Toronto Star since 1985. Archival clippings of the two dailies were used in every chapter. In addition, the authors consulted the sources listed below.

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